

The Ethics of Care. A Narrative Inquiry with Teachers of Ethics

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ABSTRACT

EMMA MARIA HICKEY

THE ETHICS OF CARE. A NARRATIVE INQUIRY WITH TEACHERS OF ETHICS.

This qualitative study explores teachers' concepts and practices of care and the means by which they seek to teach care to their students in the Ethics class. It draws on literature about the ethics of care, mostly that established by feminists' critique of the conventional theories of moral development and the political and social devaluation of caring. This was used to look into six Ethics teachers' insights about caring relations within the Ethics classroom and their challenges in teaching students how to care. Reflecting the relational politics and ethics of care, a narrative methodology was followed to gather the narratives of the teachers, shedding light on limitations of the current methods as well as external factors which hinder the ability to care in today's society.

The data was collected through conversations with the teachers. Their narratives included issues such as the effects of neoliberal demands, the virtual isolation of youngsters and the emphasis that these factors place on the autonomy of individuals. Through these conversations about the significance of caring relations within the existing framework of the teaching of Ethics, a number of suggestions were made: such as the intricacies and embodiment of care and the relevance of providing students more opportunities to physically encounter and engage with others in order to contextually experience moral situations discussed in class. The teachers' pedagogies all point to a practical extension of feminist ethics grounded on the relational aspects of teaching. This dissertation therefore provides added dimensions to the present methods to take into consideration in the teaching of Ethics.

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KEYWORDS

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CARING PEDAGOGIES

FEMINIST ETHICS

NARRATIVE METHODOLOGY

PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

DEDICATION

To all of humanity, may you feel the will to care – always.

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My heart-felt thanks go to my mother, Jenny, and my granny, Edith, who personify care in my life; they are the reasons I care so much. Throughout my life they have been my ongoing supporters; offering me love, laughter, words of encouragement, hugs and tea.

Saurabh, who has been my ray of sunshine, making me smile every single day.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Declaration	ii
Abstract	iii
Dedication	iv
Acknowledgements	v
Table of Contents	vi

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background	1
1.2 Focus of Study	2
1.3 The Value of this Research	2
1.4 Research Aims and Objectives	2
1.5 Overview of Chapters	3

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 What is Care Ethics?	5
2.1.1 Theoretical Background	5
2.1.2 Care Ethics as an Alternative to a More Traditional Ethics	7
2.2 Gilligan and Other Theorists of Care	8
2.3 Noddings' Care Ethics	10
2.4 The Ethics of Care and Moral Education	13
2.5 Ethics Education in Malta	15
2.5.1 Fostering Care within a Community of Inquiry	15
2.6 The Educator's Obligation to Care	18
2.7 The Educator's Care for the Self	19

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 An Interdependent Methodology	21
3.2 Narrative and Feminist Ethics	22
3.3 Narrative Methodology	23
3.4 Caring for Participants	24

3.5 Ethical Issues	26
3.6 Changes in Research Design due to Covid-19	27
CHAPTER 4 THE VOICES OF CARE	
4.1 Introducing the Teachers	29
4.1.1 Bridging the Commonalities	29
CHAPTER 5 LET'S TALK ABOUT THE ETHICS OF CARE	
5.1 The Connection between Ethics and the Aims of Education in Malta	35
5.1.1 Preparing Students for Life	35
5.1.2 Identifying the Need for Relational Ethics	36
5.1.3 Relating to the Unfamiliar	39
CHAPTER 6 THE INTRICACIES OF CARE	
6.1 The Challenges of Care in Today's Schools	42
6.1.1 Teaching Care in Neoliberal Times	42
6.1.2 The Significance of Interdependency	44
6.2 The Vulnerability that comes with Care	45
6.3 Virtual Isolation	46
6.4 The Materiality of Care	47
6.5 Embodying Care	49
6.5.1 Rejecting the Idea of a Robotic Teacher	52
6.5.2 Showing Care Through Humanity	52
6.6 Pluralizing Perspectives of Care	54
CHAPTER 7 LESS TALK, MORE ACTION	
7.1 Practicing Care	56
7.2 Raised Awareness; Questionable Action	56
7.3 Active Suggestions	59
7.3.1 Encountering Caring Others	59
7.3.2 Simulations of Care	61
7.3.3 Providing Opportunities to Care	63
7.4 What it's Like to Not Be You	65

CHAPTER 8 CONCLUSION

8.1 A Deeper Understanding of Care 67

8.2 Recommendations 68

 8.2.1 Moving Beyond Moral Reasoning 69

References 71

Appendix 1 FREC Approval 81

Appendix 2 Approval of the Restructure of Dissertation due to Covid-19 82

Appendix 3 Recruitment Letter 85

Appendix 4 Consent Form 86

Appendix 5 Interview Questions 87

Chapter 1 Introduction

“An ethic of care emphasizes the value of caring relations and evaluates moral growth in terms of one’s capacity to form such relations and share responsibility for the growth and happiness of others.” (Noddings, 2007, p.55)

1.1 Background

Ethics is a relatively new subject in Malta whose set up is grounded within a concern for the variety of values that students of different beliefs and cultures live by. In the last few years, the Maltese society has become more and more diverse with the influx of foreigners seeking to find a better life, and this has increased due to the rise in economic growth (Martin, 2018) as well as the presence of a number of immigrants from areas of unrest. Throughout the years, many parent workers have had to enroll their children in local education systems which might not have been fully prepared for this sudden mix in cultures. Hence, Maltese scholars, including Professor Kenneth Wain, together with the Department of Education Studies at the University of Malta formulated a unique Ethics program to provide for the moral education of students from all walks of life, enriching their intrinsic growth which will aid in the understanding and consideration needed to live in a multi-cultural world, encouraging them to share the common values which are practiced throughout humanity (Wain, 2016).

With this in mind, as well as the acknowledgment that caring relationships play a central role in moral education (Rabin & Smith, 2013), I considered it to be beneficial to pursue an inquiry with teachers of Ethics about their experiences of caring for students within the Ethics class. I inquire especially into their reflections about the possibilities and pedagogies of the actual teaching and learning of an ethics of care. Ethics education in Malta is largely based on the enhancement of critical, creative and caring thinking of children, drawing on Lipman’s (1988) *Philosophy for Children* in order to accommodate and value difference within schools and classrooms (Wain, 2016).

Ethics lessons aim to provide students with a comprehensive education that will enrich their intrinsic growth and enable them to mature into reflective individuals who have grown up in a diverse community with corresponding rights and obligations (Wain, 2016).

Currently, the students who decide to choose Ethics education are encouraged to develop their mental faculties in order to understand themselves in relation to others (Wain, 2016). This pedagogy is based on deep reflection, argumentation and expression of ideas and ethical positions supporting the development of values mostly through moral reasoning. Although the ethics of care is an important fulcrum around which discussions related to values and morality take place, there is little research into the way teachers conceive an ethics of care and the pedagogies by which they seek to teach care. With this being said, this research seeks to articulate the concepts of teachers' ethics of care, in particular considering that they themselves are teaching care directly and/or indirectly in the Ethics class. Through this study, I sought to assess the current situation with the hope of providing suggestions which will allow us to move towards a more care-oriented Ethics class.

1.2 Focus of Study

Any responsible education provision needs to address the development of students' capacity to care through the recognition that caring for them is a fundamental aspect in teaching (Noddings, 1995). This implies that the educative experiences through which students form relations are both social and moral (Rabin & Smith, 2013). Ethics teachers' public relevance and professional contribution in enhancing an ethics and practice of care is more pronounced through an obligation to build a more caring society. This is why I focused on teachers' narratives about understanding and practicing care through the teaching of Ethics.

1.3 The Value of this Research

Since Ethics as a subject in Maltese schools is constantly evolving and improving, I believe that those who teach it on a daily basis can give an honest account about its successes as well its challenges. Additionally, from a care perspective, the first lesson in moral education is '*learning to be cared-for*' (Noddings, 2002a, p.24), thus, understanding the way teachers are able to care for their students is beneficial to the improvement of Ethics and its subject matter.

1.4 Research Aims and Objectives

The aims of this dissertation are to 1) inquire into teachers own concepts and practices of caring and 2) the pedagogies by which they seek to teach care to students in the Ethics class. By asking teachers to share their experiences and ideas through questions such as; what is your ideal of a caring teacher in class? What does the Ethics class offer in terms of opportunities for caring

relations? What are your challenges to teaching an ethics of care? I raise questions about teachers' caring responsibilities in teaching Ethics and the relation to the ethics of care, giving six Ethics teachers the space and time to speak about their caring experiences and ideas. Narrative methodology reflects the epistemological political and ethical aspects of an ethics of care. Therefore, I sought to highlight the contention of "*persons as relational and interdependent, morally and epistemologically*" (Held, 2005, p.13), rather than as autonomous self-reliant beings. However, this was only possible following intensive research about the ethics of care, care in teaching, teaching and learning care through Ethics education as well as the challenges to teach care to students which helped me develop the teacher's ideas further.

1.5 Overview of Chapters

The ethics of care came about as a response to the historical trends in ethics that reflected the ideas of some male theorists that envisaged ethics as a domain mostly based on the establishment of universal moral norms around which individuals reason out ways of acting in the world. Feminist ethical theorists and other care ethicists (Gilligan, 1982; Noddings, 1984; Held, 1987; Ruddick, 1989; Tronto, 1989) asserted that there is more to ethics than a strong appeal for reasoning along standard rules and expectations. This said, an ethics of care does not make sense if it is understood without any reference to the contexts in which it arises (Gilligan, 1982). So, although no one would object that the idea of an ethics of care should be taken up world-wide, universally it does not make sense to conceive it in a relational vacuum.

Chapter 2: The *Literature Review* presents theoretical debates about these issues, introducing the ideas of care theorists who are relevant to this study. Further on, there is a section dedicated to Noddings; who is one of the most influential scholars that has greatly contributed to the study of moral education, this is included to ground the analysis of teachers' narratives of care. To aid this analysis further, a contextualized account of the teaching of Ethics in Malta, as well as the teaching methods used are also included, with a final section about the teachers' obligation to care.

Chapter 3: The *Methodology* chapter clarifies the links between narrative practice and the ethics of care, highlighting the significance of viewing both as relational practices (Held, 2005; Noddings, 2003a). Additionally, the interdependence found in narrative approaches is considered as a means by which care can be practiced with participants (Busche & Marshak, 2009; Frank, 1997; Freedman & Combs, 1996). Reference to Tronto's (1993) five notions of care was also included in order to

elaborate on the very ethics of care through which the research methodology with teachers of Ethics was grounded.

Chapter 4: *The Voices of Care* introduces the six teachers who took part in this study, connecting them on the basis of their love for philosophy as the reason for their interest in teaching Ethics. This chapter also links the ability to change societal beliefs and behavior through the expression of teachers love and care for students.

Chapter 5: *Let's Talk About the Ethics of Care* discusses the methods which are followed in order to teach Ethics in Malta and their implementation in class, as well as the challenges that the teachers face and their relation to the ethics of care.

Chapter 6: *The Intricacies of Care* goes into further detail about the challenges that arise when teaching Ethics. Tackling issues such as the virtual isolation which threatens student's well-being, the challenges of distributive justice which create a need for the materiality of care and teachers' embodiment of care through the humanity and openness to students which is required in the teaching of Ethics.

Chapter 7: *Less Talk, More Action* focuses on the aspect of practice which is said to be missing in Ethics education. Where in the hope of providing more opportunities for students to encounter care, a number of suggestions were presented from the conversations with teachers.

Chapter 8: *The Conclusion* brings together a deeper understanding of care which emerged from the teachers' honest narratives. Through their willingness to help students flourish, the teachers provided ample suggestions which are listed in the recommendations.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 What is Care Ethics?

“A great attraction of care ethics, I think, is its refusal to encode or construct a catalog of principles and rules. One who cares must meet the cared-for just as he or she is, as a whole human being with individual needs and interests. [...] At most, it directs us to attend, to listen, and to respond as positively as possible. [...] it recognizes that virtually all human beings desire not to be hurt, and this gives us something close to an absolute: We should not inflict deliberate hurt or pain. Even when we must fight to save our children, we must not inflict unnecessary or deliberate pain.” (Noddings, 2012a, p.108-109)

2.1.1 Theoretical Background

In order to get a better understanding of the development of the ethics of care and its relation to moral development, it is necessary to first consider the perspectives of two particular theorists that have come to different, yet highly influential understandings as to how individuals develop moral ideals. The first theory is that of Lawrence Kohlberg (1969), who is seen as one of the first scholars to consider child development from a moral perspective, and the second is Carol Gilligan (1982) who criticized Kohlberg’s theories as being gender biased. Kohlberg (1969) leaned towards a concept of justice that reflected the idea of an autonomous individual whose degree of moral development is very much determined by the norms and values taken to be universal by dominant moral theorists and psychologists (Olapido, 2009). Consequently, moral understandings that differed from these theories were considered to be lacking and not properly developed (Friedman, 2000).

In the 1950s Kohlberg (1969) became aware that the field of morality was solely centered on perspectives from a behaviorist and psychoanalytical point of view (Kohlberg, 1969). His inquiry arose from the belief that these perspectives failed to consider the role of responsibility in defining moral behavior and adherence to moral relativism (Kohlberg, 1969). Therefore, in order to explore and analyze another outlook, Kohlberg (1969) adopted Piaget’s (1932) storytelling technique in order to present a variety of moral dilemmas to children of different ages (Piaget, 1932). Essentially, Kohlberg (1969) established that in order for experiences to become part of the cognitive and social processes of moral development, emphasis must be placed on the intrinsic worth

of those learning experiences (Olapido, 2009). He believed that through the practice of dealing with moral dilemmas, young people could develop the skills they needed to apply to “real life” scenarios, which would in turn form morally inclined citizens (Olapido, 2009).

Through this research, he concluded that persons go through different stages of moral development which include; fear and authority, fulfilling personal desires, affection, and agreement with universal ethics (Kohlberg, 1969). This means that a person’s stage of moral development is determined by the scale that Kohlberg has set according to these criteria, mainly those reflecting their abilities to reason independently and not simply follow moral laws.

“I have always tried to be clear that my states are stages of justice reasoning, not of emotions, aspirations or action.” (Kohlberg, 1984, p.224)

Carol Gilligan (1982), a feminist ethicist and psychologist, felt that Kohlberg’s approach limited morality to issues of rights and justice and portrayed more of a ‘masculine ideal’ (Goldstein, 1998). Claiming that women and girls who are socially shaped into caring beings portray a different kind of moral ‘thinking’ which is shaped by their concern for relations with other people, rather than laws or rules. Gilligan (1982) argues that women sustain and maintain connections through their decisions which are based on caring and response rather than on universal principles (Goldstein, 1998).

“The notion of care expands from the paralyzing injunction not to hurt others to an injunction to act responsively toward self and others and thus to sustain connection.” (Gilligan, 1982, p.148)

Gilligan (1982) disagreed with Kohlberg’s (1981) classification of Amy’s response to the Heinz dilemma (for full dilemma refer to Kohlberg, 1981, *The Philosophy of Moral Development: Moral Stages and the Idea of Justice*) as inadequate, arguing that Kohlberg’s standards that measure moral development excludes the very voices of women based on their own caring relations and experiences. Amy’s response to the Heinz dilemma presented by Kohlberg (1981) was simply labelled as reflecting an inferior kind of reasoning because it did not adhere to Kohlberg’s (1981) stages representing independent thinking. For Amy, the sustainability of Heinz’ relation to his sick wife was an essential factor in whether he should steal the drug or not. Consequently, Gilligan (1982) expressed that a different voice in moral reasoning should not be excluded and an ethic of care should be given the value it deserves in society.

Considering that caring in society is mostly manifested by women; their experiences, perspectives and ways of reasoning can contribute to an understanding of an ethics of responsibility that is grounded in relations and responses to others and the ways in which relations influence morality (Goldstein, 1998). Since the norms of morality were very much determined by 'masculinized' norms and rules that assumed universal application, the particular and specific moral decisions and actions taken up within particular contexts and relations were very much undervalued (Friedman, 2000).

2.1.2 Care Ethics as an Alternative to More Traditional Ethics

Whilst Gilligan (1982) set the stage for the study of care and concern, there were several other female philosophers that followed suit. Generally, their ethics of care is based on the idea that caring (in the ethical sense) can be grasped through experiences of care and response, rather than by following an application of universal standards of how one is to care (Gilligan, 1982).

Care ethicists sought to emphasize the essence of human relationships and the interdependencies within them, as well as point out how caring practices and moral attentiveness to unique others could be an alternative to male-oriented philosophies and traditional moral theories (Friedman, 2000). Kantian ethics that profess the notion of an autonomous subject that is able to reason and take decisions of his/her own is clearly different from one in which decisions take others into account. The Kantian maxim 'do not do unto others' still very much revolves around the needs of individuals whose interest in not doing harm to others still stems from the very position of the I (I in the place of other) and never consider the other as *the other* (Friedman, 2000).

Kantian ethics focuses on the development of one's moral autonomy through the ability to think rationally and act according to one's respect for moral laws (Friedman, 2000). Giving great importance to matters of principle, justice and universality which appear to portray morality as impartial and impersonal (Friedman, 2000). This ideology seems to detach moral agents from emotions and inclinations, while simultaneously disregarding the relational aspect of moral reasoning which care ethicists defend. According to Friedman; "*If we lacked the resources for emotional sensitivity to the feelings and attitudes of other persons, it would be difficult, if not impossible, for us to develop deep concern for their moral situations*" (Friedman, 2000, p.213).

Thus, care ethics asserts that one's capability to reason is directly affected and practiced through our encounters with others which, in turn, enhances moral competence (Friedman, 2000). This alternative feminist view of autonomy intertwined with social awareness is explained in the following statement:

"A person can realize autonomy while remaining dependent on others, caring for them intensely, taking ample account of the needs and desires of loved ones, cooperating with others in collective endeavors, or on some accounts, even subordinating herself to others."
(Friedman, 2000, p.218)

With this in mind, some feminist philosophers initiated a debate on subjects that were formerly ignored or interpreted to reflect predominant male theories (Friedman, 2000). They desired to explore and highlight women's particular experiences with the intention to present a contrasting, yet equally valuable, feminine approach which would bring to light the importance of human relations, the avoidance of pain, and the practice of practical, moral matters of care and concern (Friedman, 2000) within particular contexts.

2.2 Gilligan and Other Theorists of Care

Gilligan's response initiated other debates from feminist philosophers, acting as *"a challenge to both traditional and contemporary assumptions underlying moral theory"* (Kittay and Meyers, 1987, p.3). Her contributions about morality raised questions which were previously left unsaid highlighting particular feminine perspectives on morality (Kittay and Meyers, 1987).

Gilligan (1993) differentiates an ethic of care from a theory of justice. Stating that the ethics of care is *"the central tenet of nonviolent conflict resolution"* which holds *"belief in the restorative activity of care"*. For her, *"the actors in the dilemma arrayed not as opponents in a contest of rights but as members of a network of relationship on whose continuation they all depend"* (Gilligan, 1993, p.30). Gilligan (1993) claimed that one cannot deal with moral dilemmas both as issues of care and justice because the two viewpoints differ in the way they organize problems (Held, 2006).

Although these theories were initially seen to oppose one another, they both tackle issues of great moral standing. Hence, theorists like Sara Ruddick implied that justice and care should not be isolated but that *"justice is always seen in tandem with care"* (Held, 2006). Consequently, Gilligan

later revised her ideas and succumbed that both perspectives are incomplete and, in keeping with Ruddick, should be intertwined to encompass a 'mature' moral orientation (Friedman, 2000).

Virginia Held's (2006) take on the issue of caring, argues for a more political aspect of care. She takes a step further from the seemingly private and personal relations of caring and points towards the possibility of the ethics of care tackling social issues (Held, 2006). She links the ethics of care with the increasing awareness in civil society, and deliberates the limits which are suitable for the language of rights (Held, 2006). Furthermore, Held (2006) demonstrates the potential of this feminist ethic in facing global problems and re-arranging the frameworks of worldwide concern for others (Held, 2006).

"We can also begin to see how the ethics of care should transform international politics and relations between states as well as within them. Building on its feminist roots, the ethics of care notices rather than ignores the role of the cultural construct of masculinity in the behavior of states." (Held, 2006, p.161)

Similarly, Joan Tronto (1993), insists on the importance of political dimensions of an ethics of care and its contribution to public wellbeing. Stating that using care as a political idea *"would change our sense of political goals and provide us with additional ways to think politically and strategically."* For Tronto (1993), aiming to guarantee *"that all people are adequately cared for is not a utopian question, but one which immediately suggests answers about employment policies, non-discrimination, equalizing expenditures for schools, providing adequate access to health care, and so forth"* (Tronto, 1993, p.143). She argues that the present situation for providing care is unacceptable even to carers themselves, especially because of the feminization of acts of caring and the caring professions. Expressing that; *"Caring activities are devalued, underpaid, and disproportionately occupied by the relatively powerless in society"* (Tronto, 1993, p.113). Tronto (1993) elucidates the importance of increasing questions about political institutions which could bring us to the re-thinking of caring professions.

In the same way, Eva Kittay (1999) strongly believes that care should be regarded as a public concern since she asserts that we are all dependent on others at several points in our life. She speaks about "dependency work" as caring for others who are naturally dependent, such as young children, elderly, and the disabled (Kittay, 1999). Affirming that this type of work involves relations of trust

which; *“at its very crux, is a moral one arising out of a claim of vulnerability on the part of the dependent, on the one hand, and of the special positioning of the dependency worker to meet the need, of the other”* (Kittay, 1999, p.35). Kittay (1999) states that care can be promoted far past its level of requirement when its value is understood. This feminist argument does not only rest to adding public value to relations of care and the caring professions. It holds that we should share the time, services and attention required from each other rather than leave these responsibilities to women (Kittay as cited in Held, 2006).

“I have argued for a public ethic of care based on the idea that we are all embedded in nested dependencies. It is the obligation and responsibility of the larger society to enable and support relations of dependency work that takes place in the more intimate settings, for that is the point and purpose of social organization—or at least a major one.” (Kittay, 2011, p.56)

2.3 Noddings' Care Ethics

Nel Noddings' (1984) ethics of care reflects the ideas of the feminist theorists of care mentioned above, mainly the feminist argument that care, due to its association with the feminine, has been largely devalued and that moral reasoning generally reflects a masculinized perspective of human relations based on the primacy of law. It is this patriarchal set up that gives power to a universal form of rationality that does not really consider the particularity of the contexts of caring relations. Noddings' theory is especially relevant to my study since she is considered to be the most influential person (Goldstein, 1998) in discussing care in and as education. Noddings' interest in this subject sparked from her early encounters with educators who cared for her, as well as her own experiences of caring for others as a mother and teacher (Smith, 2004, 2016). Her theory stems from the belief that caring and relationships are an essential part of the educational goals that teachers should aspire to (Smith, 2004, 2016) and that caring relations are educational themselves.

According to Noddings (2002) caring is a response to something or someone in a manner that enhances their growth, thus, this should be tied to the educational goal for a moral life. Nyberg (1990) describes this beautifully by stating that; *“Caring begins as an interest in someone that expands through knowledge to a feeling and a commitment to help the person to exist and grow”* (Nyberg, 1990, p.81).

Noddings (2002) understands an ethics of care as universally relevant, stating that caring is the source of all moral striving and human freedom, and that social justice can only be attained by a society comprised of people who are able to care. This does not mean that there is some universal law of how and why to care but that the universal ideal of care generates the possibility of different forms of caring within different contexts and between different persons. She continues by emphasizing that we, as humans, are under continuous construction; constantly affected by each and every encounter we experience and their effect on us as reflective beings (Noddings, 2002).

Noddings' (1984) care theory is centered on the caring relation that is established and maintained through a relational encounter between the 'carer' and the 'cared-for'. This relation requires the 'carer' to show attentiveness, observation and receptivity to the needs of the 'cared-for' (Noddings, 1984). However, in order to complete the caring encounter, the cared-for needs to respond in a way that shows that the caring has been recognized (Noddings, 1984). The acknowledgment of the carers' efforts is crucial to this moral theory because it means that the caring relationship has been established and can be further maintained and enhanced (Noddings, 1984).

According to anthropologists and psychologists alike, humans have the universal need to be cared for which Noddings (2007) refers to as a "*basic good of moral life*" (p.42). Consequently, Noddings (2002a) states that the first step in moral education from a care perspective is '*learning to be cared-for*' (p.24). She emphasizes that; "*one learns not only how to care by being cared for, one learns that one must care if the self that has been confirmed by receiving care is to be sustained*" (Noddings, 2002, p.24). Hence, we see that the acknowledgment of the carer is not simply for the purpose of giving merit to him/her; however, it is in order to receive confirmation by the cared-for and show his understanding of what it means to care. Such statements have substantial implications on the teaching profession and how teachers come to care. How they conceive and practice care, how they can teach caring to their students and the public relevance of their acts of caring. Further to this, what is even more relevant to this study is how the teaching of Ethics can be a significant public contribution to a caring society.

Noddings' (1984) 'philosophy' suggests that certain acts like '*engrossment, receptivity and motivational displacement*' are indicators of caring. However, she makes it clear that care cannot really be defined, since its relational uniqueness is very much dependent on the particularity of the persons and context (Goldstein, 1998). With this said, certain acts can be identified to give us an

idea of the caring that is involved. For example, Noddings (1984) identifies 'engrossment' as the act of giving the 'cared-for' full attention; 'receptivity' (Noddings, 1984) is the openness to see and feel with *the other*; and 'motivational displacement' (Noddings, 1984) is referred to as the priority that the 'carer' gives to the needs of the 'cared-for' (Goldstein, 1998). Noddings insists that this caring conduct should not be regarded as a 'personality trait' but rather as a deliberate moral and intellectual standpoint (Noddings, 1984) towards which one may aspire to. She refers to such acts as follows:

"When my caring is directed to living things, I must consider their natures, ways of life, needs, and desires. And, although I can never accomplish it entirely, I try to apprehend the reality of the other. This is the fundamental aspect of caring from the inside. When I look at and think about how I am when I care, I realize that there is invariably this displacement of interest from my own reality to the reality of the other... I must see the other's reality as a possibility for my own." (Noddings, 2013, p.14)

Mutuality and reciprocity are the key elements in the ethics of care (Noddings, 1984) and are therefore essential to a conception of relational ethics. Those who form a caring relation must mutually recognize and appreciate each other's response in order for the relation to grow (Noddings, 1984). Since, according to Noddings (2012b), "*without this response, there is no caring relation, no matter how hard the carer has worked at it*" (p.53). It is considered necessary because the response may help the 'one-caring' to further understand the needs, desires and interests of the 'cared-for' which can then deepen the relationship and continue to enhance its growth (Noddings, 1984). Nonetheless, reciprocity does not bind individuals to specific roles taken in particular encounters; rather, the labels 'one-caring' and 'cared-for' are simply names for accepted positions in different meetings (Noddings, 1984).

Furthermore, there are various occasions throughout life in which unequal relations may occur, for instance, parent-young child, teacher-student, nurse-patient and so on (Noddings, 1984). These are cases where only one person can take on the role of the 'one-caring', and, the response of the 'cared-for' is not always clear or certain (Noddings, 1984). These unequal relations can be especially tough for the 'one-caring', therefore they require special support from a caring community in order to sustain the relationship (Noddings, 2012b).

With reference to the above, Noddings (1984) specifies two types of caring; “*natural caring*” and “*ethical caring*” (p.79). The cherished human condition is that of natural caring, where people respond to each other out of the desire to care and be cared-for; there is no moral effort needed for this (Noddings, 1984). Ethical caring, on the other hand, is necessary when there is a glitch in the relation and negative feelings are involved. The ‘one-caring’ would like to care but in order to do so he/she must refer to their ‘ethical ideal’; where memories of caring and being cared-for allow them to respond as though they are inclined to do so (Noddings, 1984). Thus, the act of ethical caring is aimed to restore the relation to one of natural caring.

“It is this ethical ideal, this realistic picture of ourselves as one-caring, that guides us as we strive to meet the other morally. Everything depends upon the nature and strength of this ideal, for we shall not have absolute principles to guide us.” (Noddings, 1984, p.5)

2.4 The Ethics of Care and Moral Education

Care ethics has been said to follow Vygotsky’s (1978) socio-cultural psychology theory which emphasizes that development and the construction of knowledge are facilitated through the relationships formed between students and teachers (Goldstein, 1998). The ethics of care simply builds on this theory by focusing more on the nature and role of caring relationships in the process of moral education (Goldstein, 1998). When teachers view their position as opportunities to engage in caring encounters, they involve their students in what is called ‘meaningful learning’ through which they may learn how to care (Goldstein, 1998). So as to present this type of learning experience, the teacher must understand the individuality of each child and their talents in order to provide them a unique education (Goldstein, 1998). The first step in educating children from an ethics of care standpoint is to educate them as ‘whole people’, this way their needs as well as the societies’ can be addressed in a lasting way (Rogers & Webb, n.d.).

Noddings’s (2002) describes education as a collection of planned and unplanned encounters which stimulate growth through the attainment of awareness, talents, understanding and gratitude (Noddings, 2002). In focusing our efforts on trying to educate children about the caring response, we are contributing to the creation of an ‘ethical ideal’; that being, “*a habitual self that is caring*” (Noddings’s, 2002, p.215). When Noddings (1992) talks about moral education, she does not only refer to caring encounters, she also highlights the importance of learning to care for oneself, family,

friends, strangers, animals, the Earth and even ideas. Additionally, she specifies four components that enable moral education, these are listed below:

Modelling: Modelling is an important component in the teaching of care since, in order to encourage students to be moral, teachers must demonstrate caring in their approach to students (Noddings, 1995). This has also been confirmed by social learning theorists who have stated that learning and behavior occurs as a result of the observation and imitation of role models who play a part in children's lives (Olapido, 2009).

Dialogue: Through dialogue the teacher may be able to model the components of what it means to be moral through communication (Noddings, 2002). This type of receptive dialogue requires flexibility, patience as well as a readiness to stick with the other through hard times (Noddings, 2007). In order to show willingness to listen to the conveyed needs of the cared-for, the carer must begin with the question "*What are you going through?*" (Weil, 1977, p.51), this question is basic to both moral life and an ethic of care (Noddings, 1984). It allows both the 'carer' and the 'cared-for' to engage in the mutual quest for understanding, empathy and gratitude (Noddings, 1992). Thus, by participating in dialogue, students can further enhance their moral development through the practice of acceptance and reflection (Noddings, 2002).

Practice: Practice is not limited to dialogue within the classroom; it also needs to extend to opportunities where students can exercise caring within the community (Noddings, 1984). She suggests that in order to become caring individuals, they must be exposed to real-life experiences where they can participate in activities with adult models who emphasize the importance of care and engage students in dialogue about the rewards of such work (Noddings, 1995).

Confirmation: In order to further inspire the growth of moral beings, teachers must finally confirm students' ethical and intellectual development and celebrate their accomplishment in order to encourage further motivation of good (Bergman, 2004). This does not require suggesting one ideal and supposing high expectations from everyone, instead it recognizes something commendable trying to surface in each person we encounter (Noddings, 1995). Essentially, confirmation is a way of helping the *other* to realize their best self; however, this can only be done following the formation of a caring relation (Noddings, 2007).

2.5 Ethics Education in Malta

In the introduction (refer to p.1) I referred to the socio-economic and inclusive educational contexts that led to the introduction of Ethics in schools. This unique Ethics program is mostly influenced by pedagogies of Matthew Lipman's (1988) *Philosophy for Children* which seeks to aid in the process of human flourishing, rather than the laying down of rules (Wain, 2016). It is a non-confessional initiative that welcomes students from all walks of life and encourages them to share the common values which are practiced throughout humanity (Wain, 2016). It seeks to enrich the student's intrinsic growth which will aid in the understanding and accommodation needed to live in a multi-cultural world (Wain, 2016).

The teaching of Ethics in Maltese schools is based on a 'community of inquiry' (Lipman, 1988) which is built on a sense of trust and comfort, where members should feel respected, and where encouragement to communicate (as friends) through different exchanges of thoughts, reason and honesty are continuously practiced (Wain, 2016). The lessons revolve around shared ethical values which are "uncontroversial" and aim to bond cross-cultural relationships (Wain, 2016). Hence, through the appreciation of differences, the Ethics program aims to expose children to the fact that although we may have our own cultures, beliefs and traditions, we can still be a part of the same community and live in harmony (Wain, 2016). Furthermore, appreciation and respect are recurring words used towards all sentient beings, close family, friends, humans, animals, the environment and our surroundings which is natural or man-made (Wain, 2016).

2.5.1 Fostering Care within a Community of Inquiry

Friendship and co-operation are essential to the positive outcome of philosophical analysis in a classroom; based on the notion of a community of inquiry (Lipman, 2011). The main principle of this community is "*letting the argument lead*" (Lipman, 2003, p.85) where together, students unceasingly seek to find meaning and truth in situations which they may have previously found confusing or controversial (Lipman, 2011). During this process, Lipman suggests that the educator is a co-inquirer who simply directs the discussion without any pre-established goal (Lipman, 2011). When investigating moral issues together, children will hopefully become more thoughtful and respectful of one another, while also realizing that everyone has a unique perspective on matters (Lipman, 1988). The aim of this new-found philosophical community, is to create a space where everyone is accepted and listened to, where a joy for learning is instilled, different capabilities of thinking are benefitted from, relationships are built through rational communication, the search for meaning

becomes a collective goal, a sense of harmony is felt, calm debate can be fearlessly explored, a formation of independent opinions is encouraged and where conflict is seen as beneficial to learning (Lipman, 2011).

Lipman (2011) thought of philosophy as higher-order reasoning, which, in order to be considered excellent has to consist of a trinity of criteria comprising of creative, critical and caring thinking. Further stating that part of our reasoning should involve an element of sensitivity to values (Lipman, 2011). Lipman (2011) suggested that our emotions play a part in the decision-making process, thus, we should acknowledge and improve on character building through the repetition of examining moral reasoning in different theoretical and practical occurrences. To be more precise, Lipman's (2011) notion of caring thinking consists of the following elements; concern for others, appreciation of them, how one ought to act in situations, and the way one should cautiously weigh situations and contexts out prior to judging them. He believed that;

“Without caring, thinking is devoid of a values component. If thinking does not contain valuing or valuation, it is liable to approach its subject matters apathetically, indifferently, and uncaringly, and this means it would be diffident even about inquiry itself.” (Lipman, 2003, p.270)

Lipman (2011) proclaims to give equal importance to the three c's. However, Ann Sharp (2014), who was his colleague, conceded that caring thinking was not given the same amount of significance in Lipman's curriculum and should be at the forefront of the community of inquiry instead. She believed that;

“Caring thinking suggests a certain view of personhood and a pedagogical process. It also suggests a particular environment for the cultivation of such thinking. I am referring to the process of communal inquiry and the democratic environment of the classroom community of inquiry. It is as if you can't have one without the other, if you are interested in cultivating caring thinking among children on a large scale.” (Sharp, 2014, p.16)

Sharp emphasizes that students truly begin to care about the process of inquiry and its outcomes as they become more aware of the beauty of the social dimensions it presents (Sharp, 1997). Further to this, she highlights that without care it would be impossible to think ethically or place valuation

on anything, stating that “*What we care about reveals to others and to ourselves what really matters to us.*” (Sharp, 2014, p.17). Sharp refers to caring as a type of intentionality which students require in order for educational growth to take place, concluding that so much more than logic and reason are required in order to foster caring thinking (Sharp, 2014). She states that when students engage in the community of inquiry, they are devoting themselves to an exercise which has intrinsic meaning and requires care for: the means of inquiry, the dilemmas they think worthy of inquiry, the quality of dialogue and their peers with whom they are inquiring (Sharp, 2014). Through this process; “*They discover themselves as cooperative inquirers, persons who are feeling, intuiting, wondering, speculating, loving and willing, as well as thinking and writing, encountering the whole vast range of human experience with their classmates and teacher.*” (Sharp, 2014, p.20)

Sharp’s vision of care includes aspects mentioned by the ethicists of care described earlier in this chapter. Highlighting the requirement of a caring environment as well as reciprocity in being part of the community of inquiry. These points are similar to Noddings (1984), who argues that caring is fundamental to dialogue. Having said this, Sharp’s idea of care focuses more on the subject, the process of inquiry and in revealing what the children care for. So, although the care for thinking and revelation of what students care about are essential to the formation and ongoing element of dialogue, Sharp’s approach does not directly suggest the care of others beyond their thinking. Noddings’ understanding of care goes further since it revolves around care and concern for the outlook and interests of others *within* a reciprocal relation (Noddings, 1984), this goes beyond engaging with others solely as thinking beings.

Another important aspect of care ethics that goes beyond caring thinking within the community of inquiry is the educator’s role. Here, the teacher is not only seen as a facilitator of the thinking process; guiding students to care about what they and others think about. In care ethics, the educators themselves are caring beings whose care is educational in terms of the engrossment, reciprocity and motivational displacement which takes place in order to understand and engage in relations with students. Caring educators recognize that their students have a variety of talents and interests which require an amount of competence in order to satisfy their needs (Noddings, 2007). They must prepare themselves broadly in order to teach students using a range of materials and methods which can enhance their learning needs (Noddings, 2007). This approach should allow students the opportunity to follow their interests and well as seek new ones too (Noddings, 2007). Competent teachers must be able to connect their subject to relatable ones such as artistic

appreciation and critical reasoning; through this practice they can enjoy learning by making associations with their own interests (Noddings, 2007).

2.6 The Educator's Obligation to Care

One of the aspects of the ethics of care that problematizes the naturalization of the relation between the carer and the cared-for is the issue of professional recognition of carers and their caring. As explained earlier in this chapter caring is conceived as natural in that it emerges out of relations between human beings rather than from man-made principles. Such natural caring, although initiated by the carer towards the cared-for cannot always be sustained for the following two reasons;

1. The carer is not appreciated and/or her caring is not well received.
2. The continuation of the caring itself is not tailor made for the needs of the cared-for; either because the cared-for does not respond, or the carer does not understand the needs or responses of the cared-for.

In the case of the above-mentioned situations, Noddings (1984) explains that the carer must draw on ideals of caring that he/she has experienced in order to be able to care for others. Consequently, when the educator resorts to ethical caring (mentioned previously) it is important for the teacher's professional development and is deeply related to the exercise of professional ethics in teaching. Schools are supposed to provide safe environments for children during the time that they are away from their families, placing teachers ethically and legally in '*loco parentis*', where they have to provide for students 'the same way that parents do'. (Enjuris Editors, n.d.). Since they are considered to be part of a collective social group, teachers have to take care of their students and "*must act according to their professional moral codes*" (Husu and Tirri, 2001, p.368). Campbell (2008) explains that;

"The moral and ethical responsibilities and realities of teaching far exceed what may be inscribed in any code, and to restrict one's view of ethics in teaching to the concept of codes, laws, and standards is severely limiting." (p.366)

Thus, although the Teachers' Code of Ethics and Practice (2012) places great emphasis on 'relationships of trust and respect', it does not delve into the particularities of the relational humanity of teaching, and the challenges faced while attempting to live up to these principles. While it is

important to follow guidelines which are listed in the code of ethics, professional teachers can also draw on the significance of their ethical ideal (Noddings, 1984) in times of difficulty.

2.7 The Educator's Care for The Self

"Caring often brings happiness, but happiness often makes us more effective carers. Parents and caring professionals are right to give attention to their own happiness because happiness becomes part of what is conveyed to the cared-for, and it also protects caregivers from burnout." (Noddings, 2007, p.48)

There are a variety of challenges which can prevent educator's from adopting an ethical ideal of care as a guide to relations of teaching and learning. The two most difficult ones for educators are occupational stress and burnout (Monteiro & Compson & Musten, 2017). There have been various studies that have shown that teacher stress is a matter of serious concern in schools around the world (Aloe, Amo, & Shanahan, 2014; Greenberg, Brown, & Abenavoli, 2016; Kyriacou, 2001). Research shows that exposure to recurring stress can eventually result in burnout, which has also been connected to physical health risks (Bellingrath, Rohleder, & Kudielka, 2010; Bellingrath et al., 2009; Blasé, 1982; Fisher, 2011; Katz, Greenberg, Jennings, & Klein, 2016).

Noddings (2013) is very conscious about the danger of stress and burnout and its' ability to hinder caring relations. She explained that the "I must" which teachers feel towards their students can be rejected and quieted during stressful times. Consequently, if teachers are not able to handle stress and prevent burnout, the motivation to care for the other may diminish due to a lack of sense-of-self. *"The caring relation depends on the teacher to "feel with" the student, in a way vicariously experiencing difficult emotions of the student"* (Monteiro & Compson & Musten, 2017, p.233). This leads to the educator's emotional fatigue, de-personalization, and lack of personal achievement (Maslach, 1976; Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). Emotional fatigue is when a person feels entirely exhausted both physically and emotionally by the end of their workday (Monteiro & Compson & Musten, 2017).

These feelings can lead to detachment from those that one comes in contact with at work, as well as, depersonalization (Monteiro & Compson & Musten, 2017). As teachers' emotional resources are depleted, they become unable to "feel with" and understand what the student is going through. This sense of numbness alters teachers' sensitivity to their students, which suppresses the teachers' will to

care (Monteiro & Compson & Musten, 2017). As a result, teachers can end up feeling insufficient and lose passion for the work which they once felt was so meaningful (Monteiro & Compson & Musten, 2017). This can cause serious damage to the teacher personally and professionally as her sense of self is much dependent on the relation between the teacher and student, not to mention of course the reciprocal decline of the students' well-being.

Although literature provides convincing arguments which emphasize the value of an ethics of care, one must also recognize the professionalism of teachers who provide that care. This comes through respect for the pedagogical expertise of the teachers as well as the concepts and understandings which emerge through their experiences and practices of care. This dissertation is therefore based on the very realization of the teachers' epistemological, political and ethical frameworks of care and education.

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1 An Interdependent Methodology

With the knowledge that an ethic of care takes shape through the outlook of “*persons as relational and interdependent, morally and epistemologically*” (Held, 2005, p.13), I aimed to align my theoretical concerns and methodological approach (Goldstein, 1998). As argued in the previous chapter, an ethics based on the concept of independent, self-reliant beings whose autonomy comes solely from their rational qualities, rather than integrating these with a deep and honest concern for others, is problematic.

Literature about the ethics of care draws on truth and knowledge as contextually situated and constructed, embedded particularly in the assertions of others with whom we are in relation (Gilligan, 1982; Held, 2005). This epistemological inclination suggests that truth is recognized through particular, contextualized situations, affecting those that we form a relationship with (Lawrence & Maitlis, 2012) and can be assessed in terms of its effects on the ones who we care for (Jacques, 1992; Tronto, 1993), promoting the recognition and honoring of the others’ past (Lawrence & Maitlis, 2012). So, although some care ethicists argue that care ethics should be universalized in a manner that everybody is committed to it, one cannot say or predetermine how an ethics of care is practiced because this very much depends on particular situations.

It is important to note that feminist arguments introduce the ethics of care as a way of tackling the needs of those with whom we are in relationship, through the emotions which flow from them, all the while being understood as a social practice (Lawrence & Maitlis, 2012). Gilligan’s studies, as well as others, highlight the fact that women (at least the ones involved in her studies) tend to view themselves as fundamentally connected to others and therefore interpret moral issues as conflicts of responsibilities, not rights (Fischer, n.d.). This means that they were less likely to adhere to rules; which assume that humans are free, equal and independent, and more likely to solve moral issues by depending on their empathic feelings of care, trust, love and attentiveness (Gilligan, 1982).

Held (2005) and Tronto (1993) developed the ethics of care at a broader political level stating that, while attempting to construe individual narratives, we must always take into account the relatedness between public, political, and private domains which have a direct impact on certain

social groups. As a result, many feminist scholars have taken on this approach as a means of understanding how people and communities evolve, and how they may (or may not) work together (Held, 2005; Liedtka, 1996; Noddings, 2003b; Sevenhuijsen, 2004; Wicks, 1996). Considering their claims that an ethics of care needs to inform a politics of care and vice versa it is important to note that care does not only stem from some natural feminine disposition due to maternal attitudes or qualities. These relational dispositions are also socially encouraged and should be included as part of the main aims of education.

Ethics education in particular includes an ethic of care which does not limit the concept of ethics as solely the development of personal dispositions. Rather, Noddings (1984) suggests care and concern, which means entering into a relationship with another and responding to the 'cared for' and their said needs. She explains that we must reflect "*our best picture of ourselves caring and being cared for*" (Noddings, 1984, p.80), referring to our ethical ideal.

3.2 Narrative and Feminist Ethics

Narratives by their very nature emerge from a relation between the one who tells and the one who listens, they do not emerge from an autonomous individual drawing on his own reason. In my study this refers to the participants and the researcher who listens, and the retelling of the stories – the researchers who tells the stories of others, and others who read or listen; continuously creating meaning in a web of relations.

Hence, it is clear; given the similar relational aspects, that an ethic of care is intertwined within a narrative research methodology. Narrative approaches to understanding ethics also begin from the story-teller; the meaning that emerges from their stories, who the narrator is addressing, the effects of their story, the meaning constructed by the listener or reader and what makes a good story (Gotlib, n.d.). In my study the personal narratives of six Ethics teachers unfold into public spaces enhancing the political function of narratives to entitize others into reinventing an ethics of care that is inspired by the multitudes of lives that have mutually affected the perception of moral situations (Gotlib, n.d.).

The teachers who collaborated in this study were prompted through individual interviews to speak about their concepts (refer to Appendix 5 on p. 87) and experiences of caring and to reflect on their encounters with students. This was done in order to relive episodes of caring that may

sometimes be taken for granted in class. All interviews were recorded and transcribed, with teachers' names being changed to pseudonyms and the data securely stored.

3.3 Narrative Methodology

To further understand the connection between the ethics of care and narrative inquiry it is beneficial to consider that "*Narrative inquiry is first and foremost a relational research methodology and while it is research it is also a transaction between people which makes ethical issues and concerns about living well with others central to the inquiry.*" (Caine et al., 2013, p.580)

Although Noddings (2012a) was not specifically referring to relations in research, the ethical perspectives here apply to the way research ethics is formally envisaged. In fact, in her 1986 article, which was published in the Harvard Education Review, she suggested that educational researchers should inquire collaboratively with their participants, and address problems that not only concerned the researcher, but teachers and students too (1986). Noddings (1986) explained, "*[i]n educational research, fidelity to persons counsels us to choose our problems in such a way that knowledge gained will promote individual growth and maintain the caring community*" (p. 506). With this caring ethic, taken on by the teacher/education community also through their codes of practice, research may be seen as 'for teaching' rather than 'on teaching' (Clandinin et al., 1993).

Since teachers' daily lives are ones of constant human dialogue and relations, narrative research is used more and more in the study of educational practice and experience (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). The reason being that through this method, the narrative researcher is able to gather stories and recount narratives of teachers' lived experiences and the meanings they give to their encounters (Gudmundsdottir, 2001). Narration is a way for teachers (and humans alike) to connect voice and experience in order to retell events which have occurred (Moen, 2006), the perspective on these moments varies in form depending on who, when and where the individual is engaging with (Heikkinen, 2002).

Narrative research can be carried out through means of a variety of data collection methods in order for the researcher and the participant to collaborate and engage in a dialogic relationship (Moen, 2006). Some forms of data collection are field notes; journal entries; narrations; letters and autobiographical writing; school documents; newsletters; images; policies; interview transcripts; observations (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). In my study I opted for conversations with participants

as this allowed me to engage with them in a relational way, understanding the meanings that they give to care and, at times, bringing my own issues and concerns with the ethics of care in schools. A number of researchers (Altork, 1998; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Heikkinen, 2002; Kyratzis & Green, 1997) have attempted to understand the shared, dialogic nature of the relation between the researcher and the participant. In doing so, they identified that the most essential aspect has been the time and space required to create a caring and comfortable situation for both (Moen, 2006). This is especially important when conducting narrative inquiry with teachers; since over the years, they have felt voiceless in educational research (Moen, 2006). Hence, in order to give them a sense of empowerment, teachers must be approached with a non-judgmental attitude (Fetterman, 1998), creating a sense of equality by means of reciprocal understanding of the narratives throughout the research process (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Consequently, this trusting environment may allow for the collaborative creation of meaningful (school) experiences, “characterized by diversity and variety, full of complexities and multidimensionality” (Moen, 2006, p.66), in the hope of offering insight on the complexities of teaching to the public.

The abovementioned is in agreement with Clandinin (2007) who states that; “*the challenge for the narrative inquirer therefore is less one of achieving the highest possible grade of epistemic clarity and is instead how to integrate ethical and epistemic concerns [...] how to put knowledge in the service of enhancing human experience*” (p. 46). Thus, by simultaneously adopting an ethics of care approach; which prompts us “*to attend, to listen, and to respond as positively as possible*” (Noddings, 2012a, p.109), and a narrative one, relations can be deepened within research (Caine et al., 2013). Furthermore, Moen (2006) suggests narrative research to student-teachers particularly because a constant interaction between theoretical perspectives and empirical data are necessary and evident, both when approaching the study, as well as in the process of analysis and interpretation of data in order to gain more clarity and insight (Gudmundsdottir, 1992).

3.4 Caring for Participants

Starting from a position of care for the prospective participants was imperative, as this allowed myself, as the researcher, to begin to form relations with those who I would be entering into dialogue with. Keeping in mind that Noddings’ (1993) perception of dialogue encompasses the notion that in listening to the other, our commitment is not to collect data per se, but “*is to the living other who addresses us*” (p.8). Further to this, she explains that when we engage in dialogue, we return to each

other, and through this connection, the caring relation is maintained as “[t]o receive the other is to attend fully and openly” (Noddings, 1992, p. 23).

Through this approach I was able to listen to and understand teachers’ accounts and stories of care from which meanings of what it is to care and how one is to care emerged. By utilizing this methodology, I could delve into the various ways that teachers experience their profession through the construction and re-construction of stories of their personal and social experiences (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990).

Firstly, the recruitment of participants was completed through opportunistic sampling, whereby a post was released on social media calling for Ethics teachers who might be interested in sharing their caring ideas. This format was used in order to provide opportunities to those who wished to have their voices heard without having to be restricted in reporting to gatekeepers. In this way, teachers could contact me directly and express their own desire to share their experiences of care in teaching Ethics.

Further to this, I desired to use an ethics of care consistently, thus, to go beyond the UREC and FREC procedures, I followed Tronto’s (1993) five notions of caring (listed in the following section) that successfully provided a sense of transparency and comfort to the participants. This was done from the very start, where I paid close attention to detail in providing a clear picture of the aims of this research study and what would be required of participants in the recruitment letter and consent form which was sent by email to willing participants before our interview. Through these documents, the teachers were also reassured that although they would be audio-recorded, their anonymity would be kept, pseudonyms for their names would be included and no more than an hour of their time would be taken. Additionally, to provide the teachers freedom and flexibility, I asked them to choose a place and time which would be convenient to them. This organic procedure was followed throughout, where even the ten interview questions prepared were of an open-ended type. This was done in the hope of giving teacher participants the power to narrate their own beliefs and lives. Providing teachers with the time and space to tell their own narrative would allow me to understand the abundance of experiences that occur in schools in a way “*that bonds the form of the telling to its meaning*” (Grumet, 1985, p.68; see also Florio-Ruane, 1986).

Following the individual interviews, the conversations with teachers were transcribed and analyzed in a manner that would facilitate an understanding of the most common, controversial and innovative suggestions which would eventually contribute to my dissertation. I began by making profiles of each teacher, listing their unique personal beliefs about care. As I gained knowledge of what the teachers believe care to be, I could then delve deeper in comprehending their experiences as teachers of Ethics also through a further exploration of existing literature that could extend the discussion about the ethics of care in the teaching of Ethics.

Since this research revolves around a feminist ethic which emphasizes that knowledge emerges from experience, I wanted to give importance to the teachers' narratives. I therefore started the analysis from their voiced experiences, rather than from existing literature. This method allowed me to view the data in a holistic manner which would do justice to the teachers' ideas, whilst discussing themes which would consider the ethics of care within particular teaching situations. Although a number of themes emerged from the interviews, I chose to develop those which would push past the existing literature and problematize current issues in the teaching of Ethics. The most significant themes which emerged were as follows; preparing students for life, difficult dialogues, the challenges of care in today's schools, virtual isolation, the materiality of care, embodying care, caring by showing humanity, pluralizing perspectives of care, raised awareness; questionable action and active suggestions.

3.5 Ethical Issues

An ethic of respect is required when conducting educational research (BERA, 2018). This must be provided to; the individuals who take part, the knowledge, independent values, the worth and educational liberty (BERA, 2018). Therefore, in order to conduct this study, it was of utmost importance to ensure personal responsibility of the project and build relations of trust with each of the participants (BERA, 2018). In addition to the professional standards which are required to conduct a research study, further standards which are inspired by an ethic of care were adhered to. According to Caine et al. (2019), the way Noddings' (1984) frames ethical issues has been seen as a more suitable qualitative alternative to the restrictions met under a more Kantian ethic, that which seems to uphold various institutional ethical review boards which tackle moral issues. I therefore turned to the very epistemologies arising from an ethics of care and followed Joan Tronto's (1993) 5 notions of caring which include:

1. Attentiveness – Recognition of the needs of others (Tronto, 1993)
2. Responsibility – Instead of a set of formal rules or promises it is fixed in a set of suggested cultural practices (Tronto, 1993)
3. Competence – Adequate caring and responsiveness, otherwise needs are not met (Tronto, 1993)
4. Responsiveness – Response to inequity and vulnerability (Tronto, 1993)
5. Trust – What society determines as a must, according to pre-established norms (Tronto, 1993)

Having said this, there are a number of ethical issues which may arise when adopting a narrative research approach. One such problem is that, “*narrative research always presents stories about remembered events and how these were experienced*” (Moen, 2006, p.63). Hence, the way that the narrator tells the story depends on the ‘facts, facilities and fiction’ which they have used in their reasoning to describe their belief of personal encounters with others (Moen, 2006).

Furthermore, the choice of narratives, as well as the interpretations presented, depend on the researchers and their perspective (Moen, 2006). Additionally, narratives continue to be interpreted by others who read the research study (Ricoeur, 1981), this may leave room for misinterpretation. Another consideration is Dewey’s (1904/1965) point that “*as the classroom is a well-known arena, it is difficult for prospective teachers to consider alternative visions and ways of teaching. Student teachers do not stop, think, reflect, and ask questions in the same way they might have done if they had entered a more unfamiliar arena*” (as cited in Moen, 2006, p.65). In other words, might more insightful questions be asked?

The intention of this study is not to judge teachers and classify their responses or concepts according to standardized practices of caring, but rather to present reflections of the issues discussed as important contributions to this field of knowledge.

3.6 Changes in Research Design due to Covid-19

Although the title and aims of my research study remained the same, some minor changes had to occur due to the covid-19 situation which took place while this dissertation was underway.

Fortunately, by the time the whole population of Malta was required to maintain social distance, I had already collected a substantial amount of data through the six individual interviews with Ethics teachers. These had been transcribed as well as analyzed with the aim of highlighting main issues about the ethics of care by Ethics teachers themselves through a focus group.

The intent of this focus group was to create a space where the teachers could engage in dialogue and enlarge their thoughts and practices of care in relation to each other's experiences of care in the Ethics classroom. This would have also provided further reflections on the practical aspect of care which I would have included in the analysis.

However, because of the restrictions which followed, the possibility of the teachers meeting face-to-face faded completely and the prospects of conducting a focus group using online means also became difficult. This is due to the fact that the teachers were highly overwhelmed by the changes in teaching which were required for the very care of their students. Nevertheless, I understood that they were extremely affected by the situation, and I did not want to add any more stress to their lives. Having said this, the aim of letting each teacher know what others think can still be reached as I will be sending a copy of the dissertation to each participant in my study.

Unfortunately, the rich dialogues that would have emerged never materialized and my analysis was based on the interviews with the six teachers of Ethics' own concepts and practices of caring and the pedagogies by which they seek to teach care to students in Ethics classes.

Chapter 4 The Voices of Care

4.1 Introducing the Teachers

I would like to start this analysis by introducing the teachers who have played a crucial role in this study. It is thanks to their contribution that I am able to present my analysis of the ideas and concepts which have emerged from their experiences and our conversations about them. Since the current covid-19 situation prevented us from engaging in a focus group which would have served as a collective encounter, I sought to intertwine the narratives gained from the individual interviews in order to create a 'written dialogue' between myself, the teachers and the theoretical ideas which came to light.

4.1.1 Bridging the commonalities

Through our conversations it became clear that the teachers share a number of common ideas in relation to the ethics of care. These include practices of love, patience, honesty, listening, discipline and even laughter. They particularly highlight the care offered by catering to individual needs, providing constructive criticism and empowering students with the tools to function in the world.

The narratives which emerged, provided insight about what it means for them to be caring teachers and the challenges that arise in pursuit of an ethics of care. The teachers painted a clear picture of the beauty of caring and the hardships that come with it, explaining that their work exceeds the requirements of standard teaching. Since Ethics as a subject speaks about the manner in which we behave in relation to others, there are added dimensions and responsibilities which teachers of this subject face. The first dilemma which all teachers struggle with is the difficulty of imparting morality in a world which seems to dictate otherwise. Ethics involves engaging with students about matters of everyday life; emphasizing the state of the world we live in, its effect on the people who reside in it as well as the commonalities and differences which emerge as a result of this.

In order to teach such a complex subject, the teachers emphasized that a certain consciousness is required in everything they do; starting from their own demeanor, their careful selection of words and the opportunities which they provide students. All of these aspects which the teacher bears in mind on a daily basis affect the relations built with students and the relations that students may then have with other people in their lives. Although Ethics provides experiences of collective growth and

maturity, the teachers went on to express specific difficulties which they come across and the ways in which these may be improved through encounter and practice, I will be delving into these further on.

For now, seeing that the title of this dissertation is called “The Ethics of Care. A narrative inquiry with teachers of Ethics” I believe that it would be best to start by presenting common factors that led the six teachers into teaching, and to teaching Ethics specifically. Although the teachers have their individual trajectories, the love for philosophy and their experiences of parenting are what motivates them to teach Ethics.

All the teachers in this study mentioned their individual experiences with learning or teaching philosophy and the richness it brought to their lives.

Poppy: The thing is, that while learning philosophy I realized that I had changed into a different person; the way I was thinking... it changed the way I thought. So, I fell in love with philosophy, you know, it broadened my mind.

Heather: I have always been in love with philosophy. So, I used to say [and I believe that this is a missing component in schools] if ever there is an aspect of philosophy being taught in schools, I will be there doing it.

Jasmine: I have been teaching it (Ethics) for about seven years now and, my inclination towards it came naturally because I also had a philosophical background. So, I could find myself very much at ease, as well, in teaching it. Especially since it links a lot to this idea of what we've been talking about; topics of intrinsic values and sharing humanitarian ideas, compassion and needs with others.

Iris explains that it is not just the love for philosophy which guides her practice, it is also the reverberations that happen as a result of this which inspired her to be an Ethics teacher.

Researcher: What do you love so much about philosophy?

Iris: Um, I think, it's that moment, the children realize that there's more than one line of thought. It's like, you can actually see their faces, there's a change in them. When they realize that there is not just one way of thinking.

The relational aspects which emerge while engaging in philosophy are very strong in these teachers' minds, so the love for children and the love for exploring ideas are very intertwined.

Iris: You have to love children, I think you have to... if you don't treat them with love and care, I think you'd be a very unhappy teacher. In a selfish way. Then, from the child's point of view, do you want them to be happy for that forty-five minutes, you know? So, yes, I think it is a caring... Look, I think the more you care in teaching, the more enjoyable life can be, but that's any job really. If you don't care, it's going to be a nightmare, right?

Although the love for philosophy also led her to teaching Ethics, Iris explains that it is her affect for and on students which fulfills her reasons for wanting to teach it. In her account, she explains that it is the students' response which she strives for; a physical response which asserts a change in their thinking and will hopefully guide them to decide how to act in a morally sound manner.

This is the mark of reciprocity which is very much in line with what is required to 'complete' the caring encounter, where the cared-for shows that caring has been received (Noddings, 1984).

It is not surprising then, that parenting was an experience that re-dimensioned teaching and was mentioned in several of the teachers' accounts of care. Most of them mentioned the impact of parenting on the way that they view and act with their students, realizing that teaching involves children of *other* parents, which raises the level of responsibility and creates an opportunity which must not be taken lightly. Poppy explained that becoming a parent is what made her want to teach, while for others, such as Heather and Holly, the role of a mother allowed them to see and practice the beauty and patience required for teaching which instilled a desire for their contribution to becoming human.

Heather: Teachers, parents and carers, we have a great responsibility, because up until *that time*, when a human being says; "okay, now I can stand on my own two feet, is this what people think? or I am forming my own individuality", you rely heavily on the people surrounding you and telling you, who you are, because that's what we do. When I became a mother, very recently, and she was a toddler, I met a friend, and I told her; "Ah, *vera mgarba ta* (she's really naughty)!" and she told me; "No, no, listen, children will become whatever you tell them they are!" And I never forgot that, you know, I treasure it. Children will become what you tell them they are!

Holly, placing herself in the parents' shoes, became humbled, realizing that she should show more empathy with students and make sure to provide them with the comfort and safety that she would like for her own child. Similarly, Heather expressed that she is comforted by the values that her child's teachers uphold, and she feels that it is important to convey these positive traits to students.

Happiness in school emerges from the exploration of ideas as well as from the love and care which is experienced in the relations built with students. As discussed in the Literature Review, in learning how to be cared-for, they will also learn how to care (Noddings, 1992). So, if Ethics - as a school subject, has to do with caring for/about people and things that matter most in life, then Ethics teachers *must* enter into relations of care with their pupils. This enriches the possibilities and exploration of ideas by students in relation to each other. Daisy explains that her encounter with Ethics enhanced her responsibility to care of her students in order for them to be caring themselves. Like the other teachers, Daisy feels that her way of thinking and behaving has evolved because whatever she does now relates to an ethical way of life as a teacher and person. As a result of this awareness, she seems to feel responsible to teach what she herself has learnt in order to assure a caring generation to come.

Daisy: Nothing in my life has affected me more (than Ethics). I mean, except having kids [laughs]. Nothing. First of all, I found a new religion, because that's something I've always struggled with - this idea of God and religion and all this. Always, always, always, from the youngest age. And to me, now, my religion is Ethics.... Where, everything around me, I start to relate to this.

Researcher: Has teaching it to students affected you, in a way, in maybe seeing things differently?

Daisy: I think it all connects in my life, to this thing of caring, because I feel that it's just an extension of that. That it's a way to guarantee, or try and guarantee that the next generation is going to be a caring generation. I really genuinely feel, that this generation is losing a lot of that contact. So, contact is becoming less and less; with the outside world, in terms of nature, in terms of the planet, in terms of other countries. Although we are now able to travel anywhere in the world, we have less and less awareness, in a way, of... No, we have more awareness of the effects of what we're doing, but we're so addicted to what we're doing that nobody wants to change. So, we do all the talk, but we don't walk the walk, kind of. So,

in a way, I feel that, I'm hopefully, influencing these kids to have a conscience about these things. You know? And that makes me happy.

In keeping with Noddings (2012), Daisy creates connections between "*the moral worlds of school and public life*" (p.779), in the hope that students can learn to participate in the flourishing of a better, caring society through the personal relations which they form, as well as for future generations to come. As Hamington (2010) states, if a community wants to encourage a caring way of life, then it must begin by expanding the caring expectations of its people.

Through her experience of learning and teaching Ethics, Holly explained that she now feels that lessons do not revolve around the curriculum or around herself as a teacher. Instead, Ethics has allowed her to feel like 'part of the pupils', considering their needs in relation to her own, as well as to the subject. Noddings (2012) explains; "*It should be clear that caring requires thinking and the caring characteristic of caring relations has both cognitive and affective dimensions*" (Noddings, 2012c, p.775). Being a caring teacher requires disciplinary and interdisciplinary thought processes which comes about through the thoughtful consideration of students (Noddings, 2012c). Thus, by contemplating their needs while preparing for lessons, as well as having a sense of curiosity to learn more, Holly is able to respond in a caring and competent manner which will allow students to be open to new possibilities by creating connections that will enrich their school experience and life (Noddings, 1999).

Holly: First of all, I must say that I like, re-discovered myself during Ethics, because first I used to teach what is written on the curriculum (as a primary teacher). You have to teach, that, that and that. But even if Ethics has its own curriculum, its own syllabus, the questions that I ask during the lessons, make me reflect as well. Not like, I'm the teacher, I know everything, you are the student and you have to reflect on what I am saying. Um, I'm reflecting with them, I'm thinking with them, because some of the questions that pop up during the lessons, I mean, they are universal. Everyone has to answer them, everyone has to think about them. Yes, I feel part of the pupils, I know that I'm guiding them, I know that I have to come up with the topics, and I am following a curriculum, yes. But then, I'm just with them, I'm part of the group, and even when I'm preparing lessons for example.

Following this introduction to the teacher-participants, their motivation to teach Ethics, and how this deeply connects their personal and professional lives, I will now focus on the teachers conceptualizations of an ethics of care, their very own relation to the practice of care and the pedagogical aspects in the teaching of care.

Chapter 5 Let's Talk About the Ethics of Care

5.1 The Connection between Ethics and the Aims of Education in Malta

In Malta, Matthew Lipman's Philosophy for Children approach (refer to the Introduction on p.1 and the Literature Review on p.15), is followed in establishing the aims of Ethics education in schools. Lipman (1995) states that *"Effective moral education requires that students actively engage in ethical inquiry, and ethical inquiry, in turn, requires that students cultivate all aspects of their thinking. The cultivation of higher-order thinking requires that students become critical, creative and caring thinkers"* (p.61). One can observe that his ideas are tied in well with the National Curriculum Framework for All (2012), that encourages these competencies of *all* students. The development into life-long learners in order to thrive in an ever-changing society is highlighted in the aims of education as described by the NCF (2012);

"The Aims of education [...] seek to prepare all children to become lifelong learners, who are confident, successful, creative, connected and engaged in the community and the world around them and who are able to secure social justice. Their education should enable them to acquire the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes that make them capable of sustaining their life chances in the changing world of employment, and to become actively engaged citizens." (p.33)

With this being said, the question that is relevant to my dissertation is how an ethics of care is and can be even more incorporated in achieving the aims of the Maltese education system and in teaching Ethics in particular.

5.1.1 Preparing Students for Life

There is a mistaken view that Ethics education is just another part of the curriculum which may be chosen as a substitute for Religion. However, when looking deeper into the subject, one will come to realize how complex and multifaceted the subject is, and how beneficial it is to the National Curriculum's aims of just engagement with the world as responsible citizens. As I explained in the introduction, Ethics is geared towards the very understanding of the self in relation to others, this allows for a community of inquirers in preparation of students to be active citizens within a democracy (Wain, 2016). Heather expresses how these have been missing components in our

education system which, for many years, stuck to old teaching methods and cultural practices leading to a society of un-critical thinkers:

Heather: I feel that, as a society, as Maltese educators, we have failed Malta miserably, because we have failed to equip our nation with the capacity of critical thinking. We don't address things critically, we are still tribal, we are still party lovers [as in partisan] and that has brought us to what we're living today.

Researcher: What do you think has added to that mentality? Why do you think people are this way?

Heather: Because they don't read, we don't read politics. Otherwise, you would notice a model, a political model, but we have not invented this political model. It's been there a while and it has been used by many political leaders, to gain control over their people. So, we don't read, we're not exposed to that, and then we fail to think. Um, so even when faced with a reality, just because that reality is very difficult for me to fathom, I brush it aside, and I just revert back to what I have been brainwashed with. And also, if I may, Religion, might have contributed a bit to this too.

What Heather is arguing for is definitely part of the Ethics program that encourages the development of the rational and communicative capacities through critical thinking. It also reflects Lipman's (1995) main tenets of the Philosophy for Children approach to improve and enrich human life through holistic educational methods that merge "*emotions and reasoning, facts and values, intuition and argument, desires and values, beliefs and dispositions*" (p.62). He also states that anything less than the whole range of ethical inquiry and higher-order thinking approaches and judgements would not be adequate to provide the breadth required to be able to participate in moral education through critical, creative and caring thinking (Lipman, 2011). Arguing that thinking cannot be considered excellent unless all three criteria are satisfied (Lipman, 1995, 2003). "*We have to follow the upward path, which entails preparing the child to be as flexible and resourceful as needed, seeking to respond appropriately whatever the circumstances, whatever the provocation.*" (Lipman, 1995, p.63)

5.1.2 Identifying the Need for Relational Ethics

This model which Ethics lessons follow is based on elaborate reasoning paired with the community of inquiry approach (refer to the Literature Review on p.15) through which, together, students seek

to find truth and meaning in situations which are presented to them and, in turn, gain better self-knowledge (Wain, 2016). It is clear that the philosophy underlying this approach is aimed for students to become better at reasoning things out by engaging in conversations, however, it draws heavily on an ideal of autonomous thinking which reflects a more Kantian perspective on morality. In agreement with Margaret Sharp's critique (refer to the Literature Review on p.16), Heather argues that although critical thinking is essential, as well as highly valued to develop one's own views in life within an environment where questioning is lacking, these aims cannot be achieved through a philosophy that upholds individualism.

Heather: Once you discuss topics of life in class with such young children, you're... The first thing you have to do is equip them with the tools; to think, to reason, to discuss. Now, once students absorb those tools, in order to be able to discuss some intricate topic, and come up with an idea, opinion, or questions, or doubts, or verbalizing thoughts. Once they have internalized those skills, then obviously, that changes who those people become and they would build their relationships differently. Hopefully, they will expect better relationships and expect better reasoning and better conversations, and better communication with other people. So, for me, *that* is what makes the syllabus invaluable and so important, in our system.

Here, Heather recognizes the problem of teaching ethics without context and in a social vacuum, explaining that if we fail to include the relational aspect, based on a common love for the world, for life, and people then then we cannot expect students to enter into the honest, democratic dialogue which is required in order to question and actively take part in the communities which we live in (Friere, 1970). Thus, in facilitating critical thinking, teachers must make it clear, that there is a difference between listening to acknowledge and feel with the other, and listening in order to understand a concept (Noddings, 2012b). If we truly want students to participate in a community of inquiry, then we must teach them to go beyond learning how to listen to each other attentively for better understanding. They need to engage in relations where meaningful dialogue can take place even at times when they do not understand each other.

Although Heather mentions the thought process (and the skills required for this) in the first part of her account, she then clarifies that her aim is not to have a class of autonomous thinkers, but a class of students who are able to use these skills to have better conversations, and in turn, better relations. Noddings (2006) suggests that when teaching students, we should go *beyond* Socrates' advice to

seek self-knowledge by “*looking at the self in connection to other selves and to both the physical and social environments*” (p.289). Thus, together with critical thinking, one of the main priorities for caring Ethics teachers should be to demonstrate how students can take part in dialogue (Burbules, 1993) through reciprocity (Noddings, 1984), in getting to know one another and learning how to respond so as to sustain each other in their journey towards understanding, and recognition (Noddings, 1992). Since whatever we learn *is* related to those who we form connections with. Critical thinking *by itself* cannot prepare us to live [effectively] in a democracy, if it does not take place in an environment which Dewey (1916) refers to as “*associated living*” (as cited in Noddings, 2008, p.87). In the same vein, Daisy mentions that one of the aims which she seeks to address in her teaching is the attentiveness to others, because when it comes to knowledge, anything can be accessed through the click of a button.

Daisy: Nowadays, our students can learn anything they want by going, “oh, Google, or Alexa!” or whatever they want. They don’t even have to think, they just need to ask. So, I think its different skills now, it’s teaching them how to be critical thinkers, teaching them how to be positive, how to look outside of themselves, at other people and the planet and so on. Teaching them how to care outside of their own, selfish [everybody is definitely selfish] but out of their own selfish existence.

Daisy suggests that students are taught to set aside their own ‘selfish existence’ ingrained by a significant amount of time engulfed by their electronic devices. Explaining that the critical thinking that takes place through dialogue is not a straight forward solution if ‘attentiveness’ (Noddings, 2012c) between speakers is not fostered. Noddings (2012b) explains that, contrary to the attention that is required for critical thinking; where one would pay close attention to a line of thought in order to provide a counter-argument, ‘receptive attention’ requires one to be open to the other so as to understand what they are going through. This attentiveness is essential for an ethics of care that is based on relating to the other as ‘other’, rather than imagining what others might be thinking and feeling by trying to put oneself in their shoes.

Daisy feels that it is imperative for teachers to help students with the person-to-person skills which they may be lacking. Thus, she is asking for the facilitation of attentiveness which consists of decentering the self, so that rather than imagining what others are feeling, one simply asks others what *they* are feeling (Noddings, 2012c). In this manner, we can seek to help students ‘look outside

of themselves' and hopefully gain an inclination to care by listening to others receptively (Noddings, 2012c). This may lead to some understanding of them, even though one has to acknowledge that the positions, perspectives and values of others may be different from their own.

5.1.3 Relating to the Unfamiliar

Holly expressed concern with her teaching methods, explaining that students do not always relate to the situations which are presented to them. According to her, young students do not understand that they can care for others yet, thus, they do not always know what/how they should feel and act. The aim of Philosophy for Children is to instill habits of thinking and reasoning so that eventually, when students become adults, they can face life situations and act upon them wisely (Lipman, 2011).

However, Holly asks whether, it is sufficient to rely solely on the faculties of the mind when it comes to learning to care for others? According to Hamington (2010) awareness does play a part, since the more we know 'the other', the more likely we are to empathize with them. However, he also claims that "*such knowledge provides the basis for empathy, but does not single-handedly motivate caring action*" (Hamington, 2010, p.676). Thus, if we want to teach students to enact care, we must go further and teach them the 'competence' of care by feeling with others. Since, solely "*intending to provide care, even accepting responsibility for it, but then failing to provide good care, means that in the end the need for it is not met*" (Tronto, 1993, p.133). In keeping with this, Poppy explained that she also came across communicative challenges with her students.

Poppy: It (care) can be taught, like this morning, I gave them a case scenario of what they would do if they saw a beggar in the street. And you know what they all tell me? They say; "You know, they beg and then they go do their nails, and then they've got a car and they've got a house". So, I tell them "not everyone who begs, has got these things! Some people beg, because they're *really* poor." So, what do I do? I change the case scenario. "Just imagine, you see a dog, out in the street." I tell them, because they have to see the difference between, you give a dollar to a beggar or you take them out for dinner. You know? The difference. So, what I did was mention a dog.

Researcher: Okay.

Poppy: The dog is outside, he's dirty, I told them "and your friend passes by and gives the dog something to eat, because he's eating something; *pastizzi* or something, and he gives him something to eat. What do you do? There's a shop, you know there is water, and the dog is

thirsty. Would you buy a bottle of water for the dog because of peer pressure?” “Ah, *ma tarax* (of course not), I would do it because I love the dog, because I love dogs!” So, yes, they can learn what care is, only if you give them a good example. They couldn’t understand, because like you said, beggars in Malta are not common, like they are in India. So, I had to use an animal, instead.

Researcher: Good idea!

Poppy: I told them, I told them that’s the difference. This is what I’m saying. I said “if you had given the water because of your friend, that’s peer pressure, but if you take it home, wash it, take care of it, and so on, love it; that’s love!” I said, “do that with people, and it’s the same thing.”

In her efforts to engage in dialogue with her students, Poppy came across some difficulties. Hence, we must ask a few questions if we wish to try and understand. Firstly, was it the subject which was difficult for students to relate to? Was it the fact that the students have never come across a beggar and therefore cannot understand their situation? Why is it that the children could relate more to a dog than a human? Finally, how can we improve students’ experiences of learning to care?

In this situation, Poppy simply attempted to discuss that which she was expected to; the issue of homelessness. However, as Dewey (1938) pointed out many years ago, we cannot expect students to understand something that they cannot relate to. Therefore, Poppy - being a caring and competent teacher, quickly thought of a replacement which her students could find it easier to relate to - since they may have cared for an animal before – explaining through this analogy instead. With her limited resources, Poppy managed to get through to her students, but if we want to give them a true lesson in care, we must go beyond simply speaking or writing about it (Noddings, 1984). Hamington (2010) suggests that “*caring requires engaging with diverse peoples to understand their specific circumstances and thus moving beyond distress over the unfamiliar to honoring difference and finding the commonalities that can give birth to connection*” (p.690).

Heather suggests leaving room for discussion and understanding. Consistently showing her students that no matter what, she would like to sustain good relations (Noddings, 1984). Through this, she managed to gain their respect since they know that her way of upholding discipline is a way of showing them that she cares. Noddings (2002) states that rights come to light from the recognition of needs, thus, by listening to how students feel and understanding how she can be of help is a way

of treating them with love and fairness. Nevertheless, such relations of care are full of intricacies, bringing to light the teachers' concerns on how we may seek to provide opportunities for connection.

Chapter 6 The Intricacies of Care

6.1 The Challenges of Care in Today's Schools

This dissertation is based on the epistemological and ethical assumption that caring is not simply a one-way relation from the carer to the cared-for but a circular event that emerges and is maintained *through* relations with others. One may assume that it is the carer who initiates the caring process through their stronger position than those who need care. Indeed, as Noddings (1984) proposes; in order for caring relations to be established, there must be 'engrossment', 'receptivity' and 'motivational displacement' (refer to the Literature Review on p.11) from the carers' part, and reciprocal acceptance of this care by the intended cared-for. However, it may not always be as simple as is proposed by this linear formula of care. The caring relation, at times, maybe initiated by the active demands placed on the carer by the cared-for.

Although care is what teachers strive for, many of them find it a challenging pursuit. Some of the teachers explained that there are various external elements that hinder this process and at times they find it difficult to get through to their students. In the following section, I will be presenting accounts which highlight the challenges that teachers face in seeking to form meaningful relations and ways in which they attempt to build bonds with students.

6.1.1 Teaching Care in Neoliberal Times

One of the topics of discussion which was raised by several of the teachers, was the issue of establishing deep connections with students who are being brought up in a world where care seems to be lacking. A world where neoliberalist ideas seem to push for citizens to think in terms of self-interest and autonomy, slowly obliterating democracy as we know it (Brown, 2015). This leaves teachers concerned about the contrasting values which they attempt to uphold within the school and those outside of it. Jasmine, for example, argues that the morals which are spoken of in the Ethics class may not be very evident in the society we live in. She asks whether it is actually possible to build the meaningful relations of care as well as teach an ethics of care in such circumstances.

Jasmine: The problem is the extrinsic values, the external, sometimes are too far off, from your inner self. So, that is the inner turmoil that might be created many times because of the

environment we work in. People who might share these kinds of views, which are very humanitarian, find lots of struggling taking place.

The link between the micro relations of care within larger schemes of life is evident in Tronto's work that argues for the political need for care ethics by placing "*responsibilities for caring at the center of their democratic political agendas*" (Tronto, 2013, p.ix). Tronto (2013) asserts that "*no state can function without citizens who are produced and reproduced through care. If public discussions do not explicitly address this question, then the care dimensions of life remain hidden in the background*" (p.26).

Educational institutions and the teaching of Ethics in particular are important in the creation of caring citizens. Teachers therefore feel the duty to ask and discuss; what type of society are students forming a part of? What kind of news are students being exposed to? What kind of world awaits them? Are we engaging in dialogue with students about the [harsh] realities that exist outside of school? Are we preparing them to be the caring people that are required to combat the neoliberal ideologies that exist?

These intricacies of care can be more easily understood, if we consider the values of the community which we are living in, and the prime concerns which are prominent in Malta. Where "*profit is prioritized consistently over the wellbeing of society*" (Alden, 2019, para.1) and the promise of an ever-growing economy, which depends mainly on migration to Malta, "*has led us to having a worsening infrastructure situation, with endless traffic, congestion, dirty air and worsening public health. It is not only the physical health of the people who live here that is affected, but their mental health as well*" (Alden, 2019, para.4).

What does this say about our society? Can Maltese people be caring if they do not feel cared-for? Or does the fact that people are making more money make them feel cared for? This neoliberal reality that we live in, which focuses on the protection of the needs and demands of the market *more than* the care for its citizens (Harvey, 2005) is what leaves teachers like Jasmine concerned and problematizes teaching an ethics of care. Seeing that, the lives and minds of [young] citizens will definitely be impacted if natural rights such as liberty, democracy, freedom and justice are considered through economic denomination (Brown, 2015).

Wrenn & Waller (2017) explain that “the socialization process becomes accommodating to the intensifying market place and the transference of culture all becomes tinged by the values of the market” (p.4). As a result, schools and the characters within it are having to live up to this accountability culture which reduces the humanity of all that happens in educational settings to ratings and outcomes (Taubman, 2009).

6.1.2 The Significance of Interdependency

Tronto (2013) highlights the fact that the market promotes an unnatural state of autonomy where relational aspects and time for caring are drastically less valued. With this said, our interdependence on each other has become more obvious due to the covid-19 crisis which has underlined our vulnerable place in the world. This situation has made us recognize the need for a politics of care that prioritizes our global interdependency (Robinson, 2018), and the introduction to powerful normative dedication to equal opportunities and universal rights (Pratt & Rosner, 2012). Tronto (2013) urges us to reject the division of public/private spheres that limit care to familial relations and instead, she encourages social input and responsibility which will result in a more caring society. This notion is explained further in her definition of care;

“On the most general level, we suggest that care be viewed as a species activity that includes everything that we do to maintain, continue, and repair our world so that we can live in it as well as possible. That world includes our bodies, ourselves, and our environment, all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life-sustaining web.” (Tronto, 1993, p.103)

Tronto (1993) proposes a different notion of care, one which focuses more on the public sphere and its effect on individuals. Noddings’ (2005) ethics, on the other hand, suggests that the private can have a strong effect on the public and that is why education should have an explicit aim to teach care. Education for care revolves around matters of care; for the self, for cherished others, colleagues and people whom we have just met, distant others, non-human beings, nature and our environment, man-made objects, and ideas (Noddings, 2005). Noddings (2007) explains that, with these in mind, it is up to teachers and parents to create the right conditions under which caring relations can thrive. Considering the difficulties mentioned above, how can this be made possible? How can we care for the vulnerable? The one considered as not contributing to the economy? The ones who cause us pain and struggle?

6.2 The Vulnerability that comes with Care

Jasmine rightly explains 'it is a greater challenge to teach care when students themselves lack it'. At the same time, Kittay (1999) acknowledges that the more vulnerable that 'other' is, the more burdensome they will be considered. Iris provides us with a clear picture of the hardship that comes with caring for someone who makes you suffer;

Iris: So, we had this really naughty student last year, which the teachers didn't really like, let's put it this way, and I had many reasons to dislike him as well. Like for example, once, he was being really naughty, I told him to leave the classroom, because he had this bottle of water and he was going to wet someone, he then mimicked it, and really did wet all these brand new charts I had just bought, like ten euro a chart and stuff. I mean, literally, I held my tears back, I was so frustrated. Anyway, a few months down the line, um, he forgot his water bottle in my class and the cleaner came in straight afterwards and threw it away, and he came to my staffroom asking for his water bottle and I said, ah the cleaner's thrown it away now. And everyone looked at him in contempt, like '*aħjar għalik*' (serves you right) you know, and without even thinking about it, I went and gave him one of my big bottles of water. Everyone in the staffroom just went silent and started looking at me like I'm crazy. But all I could think was like '*intom bis-serjeta?!*' (are you serious?!), like how could you let the child go thirsty? You know, no matter how naughty or whatever he is.

Iris explained that many of the teachers she works with, tend to label students who cause trouble, often giving up on them. 'It's like doing all this work to steer him in the right direction, for him to go the complete opposite direction at the end of the day', she explains. In order to handle this frustrating situation, Iris had to continuously remind herself of the humanity of the 'other'. The fact that teachers sometimes feel helpless problematizes what I referred to earlier as the linear, unproblematic, transmission of care that is assumed by and from the carer – cared-for relation. This conflict is clarified by Butler (2005), who states that we can never completely comprehend what others need or our own investment in them, and this renders us 'opaque' to one another (p.84). Nevertheless, as much as there is uncertainty and doubt in our relations, there is also hope; "to *make room for each other – room to flourish, regress, hurt and surprise.*" (Simplican, 2015, p.226)

Iris explains that although some people may be 'less forgiving', we must not fail to take into account the inner turmoil that students may face on a day to day basis (in and outside of school) which may

lead to this kind of behavior. Although she said that these sorts of situations are frustrating, Iris referred back to her ethical ideal (Noddings, 1984, also refer to the Literature Review on p.13) and continued to show care and concern for her troublesome student.

There are two aspects of care that are worth exploring here; judgement and vulnerability. Noddings (1984) acknowledges; *“It is clear that my vulnerability is potentially increased when I care, for I can be hurt through the other as well as through myself”* (Noddings, 1984, p.33). Butler (2005) insists that, we must first recognize the other by suspending our judgment. Her second suggestion is the reminder that an enactment of care is not always as ideal as we imagine it to be. It is imperfect and limited at times; therefore, we must be willing to forgive both ourselves and others in these moments (Butler, 2005). However, what remains ideal is; *“the commitment to receive the other, to preserve the possibility of caring, is unshakeable* (Noddings, 1984, p.111-112), *precisely in regard to the specific person who has turned ‘rotten’. One must continue to offer to care even when the care is refused.”* (Bergman, 2004, p.153)

6.3 Virtual Isolation

In the previous section I referred to the challenges which teachers of Ethics face when introducing the values of care for self and others within socio-cultural and global contexts which are harmful to an ethics of care. Further to this, Heather feels that with the increased use of social media, her students are struggling with a certain duality of worlds which they form a part of.

Heather: Now, I’ve been teaching for a very long time, and I’ve seen, this idea, lacking, lately. I think that this is, not just in Malta, it must be global. Um, we’re moving away from caring. I am also of that generation who has lived life without social media. So, I’m new to a lot, but there is this mean streak going, because it’s easy to be mean behind the keyboard, and behind the screen [...] We’ve had students fainting because, for example, they have their Christmas concert, and I ask; “why are you fainting *ħunnini* (sweetheart)?”, “because you have no idea what they’ll do to me if I fail this evening.” They’ll be up to stuff, and we’ve had cases of cyberbullying which is another form of bullying [...] I feel that I have to teach care, much more than ever. I feel that we are dehumanizing each other and objectifying stuff and people in a sense that, and if you take away the human aspect, from a person, then it’s okay to hurt them, and I feel that it’s happening.

Heather mentions that the over-use of technology for social reasons, may de-sensitize people towards others, resulting in youngsters feeling fearful and alone. This is what Suler (2004) calls 'online disinhibition', where people using virtual platforms act in a manner which they would not in a real encounter. Mason (2008), claims that this is a result of the anonymity which is present online, allowing youngsters to disconnect from their real self and, in turn, engage in negative behavior. In keeping with this, Smith et al. (2008) conducted a focus group which showed that some online harassment may be seen as amusing, and can also be the result of a lack of empathy which the offender feels due to the fact that their target is not actually present.

Although these platforms usually act to enhance positive relations, they may also be utilized by people to intimidate, shame, or hurt others (Roberto et al., 2014). Cyberbullying has been recognized as a significant public health issue which can seriously affect the lives of teenagers (Aboujaoude et al., 2015), causing adverse physical health problems (Sourander et al., 2010) and poor well-being (Kowalski, Giumetti, Schroeder, & Lattanner, 2014; Tokunaga, 2010) including depression, anxiety, tension, emotional issues, self-depreciation, and suicidal ideas (Kowalski et al., 2019). The percentage of European adolescents at risk has increased from 7 to 12% between 2010 and 2014 (UNESCO, 2019). This confirms Dewey's (1927) prediction that; the rise of technology has "*liberated the individual, but it has had destructive effects on community*" (p.98), leaving people disconnected from reality, and in turn, isolated.

6.4 The Materiality of Care

In this section I would like to veer the attention towards means by which the teachers engage in relations of care with students. One aspect that is frequently forgotten in discussions about care ethics is the material environment that can also play a part in sustaining relations. These include objects which may symbolize the care in teaching, the use of spaces and time, and as I will explain in the following section, the very body language in caring acts.

Iris' narratives describe the pedagogical use of objects which concretely demonstrate the fact that care also points towards the problems of distributive justice in schools. Particularly, how the lack of resources in a school can damage teachers' motivation to care and enhance a feeling of unworthiness in students.

Iris: It's much bigger than me in my classroom; I care. I care for my students, but if, *jien naf* (I don't know), my computer screen is broken, and they're not going to replace them now because God knows when they're going to replace them with these brand new, branded ones. It's frustrating, you know? How can I care? If I'm not being cared-for? [...] *Tgħidli* (You say) money, aha, but money buys resources, money buys security, you know. I can care all I want for my students, but I cannot afford to go and buy a projector.

Tronto (2010) points out that; "*When care givers find themselves saying that they care despite the pressures and requirements of the organization, the institution has a diminished capacity to provide good care*" (p.165). This is definitely the case for *Iris*, where she expresses that she feels uncared for by her school since they do not provide the adequate care for her students. Clearly, the issues of distributive justice which involve the "*marginalization*" and "*material deprivation*" (Gewirtz, 2006, p.74) of students is giving them a sense of inferiority when compared to other schools. According to Young (1990) there cannot be democracy without social justice, and for this to happen, voices of the disadvantaged must be heard and given importance. This may be done through Trade Unions which can bring to light the disservice that is taking place in *Iris*' school by pressuring governmental authorities to provide equal opportunities to all (Gewirtz, 2006). In the meantime, *Iris* is trying to make up for the lack of care which she feels in her school environment by providing students all that she can in the physical space of her classroom:

Iris: Mela (So), I think it is very much attitude and behavior, like I said. So, I'm not only about what I'm delivering - the content I'm delivering. Um, I'm going to say something ridiculous, but like for example on the table I have tissues, I have wipes, I have pencils, hand cream, I have this basket with pens and tissues and crayons and sharpeners. I have these bicycle things for students who can't sit still, and they sit and do that. I have table cloths, I have curtains, coasters, carpets and that's not even mentioning what I teach on the syllabus. I think those things I just mentioned send out a message to the students that you know, that we're not just here for business. You've come to my classroom, be comfortable, cozy, you know, and I think that indirectly, it's sending out a message of care.

Although *Iris* feels that she and her students are deprived of material needs by the school, she treats the classroom as her home. Equipping it with basic necessities that, although she is not obliged to provide, she feels that they are necessary to creating a positive environment of care and comfort

for her students. Research has shown that the physical setting of classrooms can affect the response of both teachers and students (Savage, 1999; Stewart & Evans, 1997; Weinstein, 1992), as well as act as a representation of what the teacher values in their students learning experience (Savage, 1999; Weinstein, 1992). By placing importance on the small details that she shares with students, Iris is showing them that she, as their teacher, can provide care in her class even though it may not be provided elsewhere.

6.5 Embodying Care

One of the important factors that emerged from my conversation with the teachers and which relates to the concrete aspect of the materiality of care is the importance of the embodiment of care by teachers through performances or physical manifestations of that care. Teaching conceived through Noddings (1984) notion of cared-for and one caring may also be thought of as the encounter between the affected body and the affecting one. Where caring is often said to be conveyed by the teacher through her 'affective' body language with students.

Heather: You have to bother, in order to care, your mind and heart have to be there in order to care. In order to convey the message in the Ethics class. I can't imagine an Ethics teacher who is not a caring teacher.

Heather: So, it starts off from the teacher, teaching and maybe emanating that from her own behavior, comportment, the way she addresses the students and so on and so forth. But then, eventually, after discussing, after doing projects, after going through the process of the syllabus, the impact on the behavior, to me, is inevitable, because you make students aware. The Ethics syllabus, helps students become more aware of subtleties that we don't address in our everyday life in schools.

One of the most prominent factors that transpires here is the value of teachers' conscious demeanor, and how their manifestations of care affect lives. Through her awareness of the affect that she has on students, Heather, makes it a point to model caring behavior. She refers to this as the first lesson in caring, where, through her own embodied actions, students gain a visual and emotional reference of what it means to care. Once they are affected by her actions, as well as the knowledge and awareness gained from the syllabus, they may also act in a caring way with others. This coincides with Noddings (2012c) who expresses that; "*The condition – the expressed need – of the other moves us. It is this capacity to be moved by the affective condition of the other that teachers try to develop in*

students as part of their moral education" (p.773). Thus, teachers of Ethics must not disregard the effect of their enacted care on students, since, according to Noddings (2012), this is a significant aspect in imparting morality to them.

Additionally, the intensity of the caring relation that Heather speaks about does not only refer to an abstract feeling and emotion. Caring here is manifested through the body of the teacher who is able to affect others, this reminds us of Noddings (1984) notion of the carer and the cared-for. However, in this case, we see that the emphasis is being placed on the teachers' body and the effectiveness of her actions, rather than the relation which is built through the encounter.

Holly also expresses that she seeks to initiate a sense of care and concern through body language. In the following account, we will see how she embodies care by instilling feelings of positivity and using words of encouragement:

Holly: The first thing I do when I see them, when I'm gathering the group (because I take children from different classes) is that I always smile at them. I believe a lot in smiling at children, I believe in it a lot. It's like a chain reaction, you smile and they smile at you. Also, the first thing when they come in class, I ask, "how are you today? It's a nice day today", or if it's a bit gloomy I say, "we're going to have fun today!" I always use a positive attitude. That's my motto, I think, by now. Since I don't always have the same class, I want them to feel safe, and by smiling, by telling them 'how are you?' and using a positive attitude, I think that they feel that they're coming in a class where they feel safe and they are respected as well.

Since both Holly and Heather place a great emphasis on the enactment of care, I must now turn to Hamington (2012), who contends that care is intertwined and communicated through our embodied actions which are intrinsically motivated (Hamington, 2004). He explains care as "*an approach to individual and social morality that shifts ethical emphasis and consideration to context, relationships, and affective knowledge in a manner that can be fully understood only if its embodied dimension is recognized*" (Hamington, 2004, p.12). In order to continue to expand his understanding, we must look at his three aspects of "*embodied care*" which include "*caring knowledge*", "*caring habits*" and "*caring imagination*" (Simola, 2011, p.476). Though, before I explain each one, it is important to note that these aspects should not be regarded purely as prerequisites to discernable outcomes which encompass caring behavior, but instead, that the embodied elements also constitute unspoken and ongoing physical experiences which will give rise to further knowledge (Simola, 2011).

What Hamington (2001, 2004) refers to as the first constituent of “*embodied care*” is that which both Holly and Heather assert in their narratives. This refers to instances where one gains knowledge of what it means to care through interactions with others; this is called “*caring knowledge*” (Hamington, 2001, 2004). With the expansion of “*caring knowledge*” (which may be gained implicitly) one may generate the capability for “*caring habits*” and “*caring imagination*” (Simola, 2011). Thus, in order to put this “*caring knowledge*” to use, one must practice habitual caring through physical exchanges which will contribute to the growth of both the carer and the cared-for (Hamington, 2004). These “*caring habits*”, may be improved when they are enacted, and debilitated when they are abandoned (Simola, 2011). Lastly, Hamington (2001, 2004) speaks of “*caring imagination*”; which is the ability to expand “*caring knowledge*” to others who we may not know in order to try and understand what that person is feeling and respond empathetically as a result of this reflective reasoning (Simola, 2011).

Similar to Noddings, Hamington (2012) focuses on the relational aspects of care which are situated in specific contexts. Nevertheless, through his notion of “*embodied care*” he goes into further detail about the physical intricacies, stating that; “*Morality is found in the relationships between embodied beings and manifested in touch, sight, physical comportment, facial expressions, and intonation as well as the words that we use. Furthermore, there is knowledge in our bodies that often goes unarticulated: knowledge of how to recognize, give, and receive care*” (Hamington, 2012, p.34). Hamington (2012) places such strong emphasis on embodiment since he acknowledges the fact that morality deals with issues of how people behave in the world. Therefore, he suggests that morality should also be taught using a performative care theory where the students can improve their caring through awareness and application (Hamington, 2012).

Poppy also shows care through embodiment expressing; ‘I believe, that I have to see what happened, and if she didn’t understand then we go back. It’s useless going forward, so we go backwards, and start again’. By paying attention to what students tell her each day, Poppy shows her understanding that life is fluid, everchanging, and students may need extra support on some days more than others. Hence, repetition and going through tasks more than once may be used as a means of showing care. This practice may also be described as empathizing with students (similar to Hamington’s notion of “*caring habits*”) by utilizing the teachers’ position as a means of providing care which might not be found at home.

6.5.1 Rejecting the Idea of a Robotic Teacher

Research suggests (Adoniou, 2012; McGregor & Mills, 2014) that various teachers who are especially dedicated to the care of students are choosing to leave the profession since they feel that it has become too robotic. This reflects Jasmin's concern about teaching which is concerned with learning outcomes and the efficient covering of topics.

Jasmin: I see it as a caring practice, but unfortunately not everyone sees it like that. Some people might see it as something which is robotic. One thing which I see that is very good in teaching is we can practice more the empathy; I think empathy in itself nowadays is nearly, close to inexistent sometimes. In certain situations. Again, I see it around me, because of the environment in general, and also, I've been reading some articles about this as well. Empathy is vanishing slowly because of the society we're living in, where everything seems to be mechanical and routine based and rote learnt. For me, caring is seeing the students as an individual, again, I believe a lot in individualized learning. *A lot.* So, looking at the individuals one by one.

Caring, from Jasmin's perspective, is showing students empathy by really seeing them as the individuals that they are. She describes the world as 'lacking empathy' and, like Poppy, seems to want to make up for that in her lessons by presenting herself and the subject as anything but 'robotic' or 'routine based'. Thus, through her teaching, she aims to show students a certain humanity and empathy which, according to her, they may not find easily in the outside-world. This is in agreement with Renshaw (2016), who states that teachers must move away from the robotic expectations which neoliberal accountability culture calls for, and instead move towards the ideal of a teacher being immersed in an environment where relations are crucial to all forms of learning. Additionally, the elements of realness and attention to needs were also mentioned and highly valued by the other participants, who described these qualities as part of their daily practices as teachers of Ethics.

6.5.2 Showing Care Through Humanity

Caring through teaching also means showing humanity to students. Most of the teachers emphasized the relevance of being honest, human and fair with students. Agreeing that a caring teacher is perceived to be open-minded and concerned by the struggles of each individual, therefore creating a just, trusting and consistent relationship with them:

Heather: So, my job is to; clear the confusion, to show them the way, how to behave, morally. How to enact your values, how to put your principle into action and I believe that, as a teacher. Now, I'm quite liberal, in the way I live my life, but, as a teacher, I have to be, a good example, I have to show them; "listen, these are my principles, and I go by them, irrespective of your trends (laughs), and of your misbehavior". In a school, when you're fair... students want fairness, teachers want their boss to be fair, people want fairness. So, being fair, and being consistent is an integral part of what we do. That's what I think; because they feel safe, they know that if they're not behaving, they know exactly what you're going to do, and that you're going to do it, irrespective of whatever. And when I have to close an eye, because there is a student going through a particular thing. I explain to the rest. I tell them, "listen, she's not getting a punishment for not doing her job, because, there is an issue, which I will not share with you." And they accept it.

By creating an environment where students feel safe and understood, teachers can be honest with them and explain why they sometimes act the way they do with some students and not others. Through this behavior students are able to see that teachers are human too and that they are there to help, rather than punish them. By presenting herself in this manner, the teacher is not only gaining the students' respect, but also providing a good example of acting according to others' needs and the situation that presents itself. Iris also mentioned her strong belief in showing humanity with students, she does this by trying to understand their needs as her own:

Iris: You have a lot of teachers that say, for example, "*le, ma tarax, li jieklu waqt il-lesson* (no, of course they cannot eat during the lesson)!". I'm not a fan of it, however, like I said, if my child is hungry, or I'm hungry [laughs] I remember from lectures. If I'm hungry, I'm going to concentrate? No. So, if they want to finish off their piece of bread, or they need to have a nibble of their bread, I say, "okay, just don't dirty the table cloth." I tell them; *u ma jqazzuwiex* (and they don't take advantage), I don't have the whole class eating, for example, you know. [sighs] If you want to be respected, show respect, okay? You cannot tell the kids to shut up in the morning and expect them to obey you later on. You know what I mean? So, I am a very, very strong believer in showing them that I'm human as well.

Both teachers emphasize the importance of consistency in their actions. They are willing to show understanding and fairness with students as long as they reciprocate with respect and honesty in

return. By gaining students trust, the teacher may act according to the situations that occur and respond in a flexible, yet, fair manner that all students can then understand.

6.6 Pluralizing Perspectives of Care

Caring for students requires an understanding of 'the other'; where they are coming from, the challenges they come across, their said/unsaid needs and the realities they face on a day-to-day basis. This requires supportive teachers who are skilled enough to challenge oppressive beliefs about differences of various kinds and use their capabilities to contribute positively to human beings, schools and society (Lawrence-Brown, 2014). Since teachers play a fundamental role in student's crucial years, their attitude and behaviour may determine the way that person's life flourishes, or not. In keeping with this, when asked to describe what caring means to her, Poppy responded:

Poppy: I wouldn't teach, had I not cared, but that's not enough! Caring goes beyond that, caring goes beyond that because after all, everyone is different, all students are different. They all have different family backgrounds. Um, their cultural capital is totally different. So, my teaching does not involve teaching *only*. It involves caring, what I mean is, taking into consideration what went on, behind, you know, what they are telling me *today*.

Recognizing that each student carries their own baggage - which they bring to the classroom, in their hearts and minds, is an important aspect of caring. According to Poppy, it goes deeper than simply engaging with students in that moment; some students have such complicated family lives that it is a daily struggle for them to simply be mentally 'present' in the lesson. Recent literature (MacGill, 2016) problematizes the universality of the ethics of care, pointing to its representation through a "*white middle-class model*" (p.239).

Rolon-Dow (2005) and Thompson (1998) challenged Gilligan (1982) and Nodding's (1984) ideas about care, arguing that their positive construction of care represents only one race, class and gender structure (MacGill, 2016). They maintain that these theories and ethics of care do not incorporate black feminist ideas that include the recognition of the communal, historical and political issues which affect lived experiences (Thompson, 1998). Poppy touches upon this crucial point when she states that our schools (and world) do not consist of a homogenous community implying that the way care is perceived and practiced varies. Thus, we cannot assume that care and reciprocity are enacted in the same way by everyone (MacGill, 2016).

“A child’s worldview is conscientized through inter-family disciplinary models and the responsibility of a child to reciprocate with an adult is coded” (MacGill, 2016, p.241). Thus, successful student learning is said to be possible through the generation of reciprocity and motivation that happens when teachers engage in on-going development of students’ cultural codes in order to build culturally safe frameworks (MacGill, 2016). So, if a teacher dismisses students’ diverse ways of caring and deems their methods to be the best, this will hamper their ability to listen, learn and understand them and, thus, thwart their teaching (Partington, 1998).

When these conflicting instances occur, there are risks of power relations between the teacher and the student who is voiceless (MacGill, 2016). Hence, if educators want to motivate and connect to their students, they must be open to, flexible and informed enough in order to try to and understand various perspectives which will, in turn, enable positive student/teacher relations (MacGill, 2016). Lastly, conditions for inclusion are created when communities are built with the capability to value all students (Lawrence-Brown, 2014). Therefore, in order to follow an ethical theory that is based on various cultural ways of doing things, *“Constructive inter-sectionality that informs pedagogical practices is needed to move towards contextualized standpoints from the position of the students and teachers within a site of commensurability.”* (MacGill, 2016, p.245)

Chapter 7 Less Talk, More Action

7.1 Practicing Care

In this final section of the analysis, I will focus on an important aspect in Ethics education which the teacher participants consider to be crucial, yet, find to be lacking in formal teaching; the very *practice* of caring. In our conversations, teachers made a very strong argument, that in order to cultivate care in students, they must be given the opportunity to enact it. This is in agreement with Noddings (1991), who states that “*people develop a moral orientation of caring through direct contact with those who need to be cared for.*” (p.164)

A number of the teacher participants expressed uncertainty as to whether students truly internalize and enact care in their daily lives. Particular concern was raised over the effectiveness of teaching care ethics solely using class discussion and role play. This is a crucial point that emerged from the conversations I had with most teacher participants considering that these are the main methods which are used for teaching Ethics in Malta (refer to the Literature Review on p.15). In this chapter, I will not only look at the arguments made by these teachers and their justification for enhanced opportunities for children to enact caring. I will also be exploring suggestions of how this could be done by delving into the potentiality of ethical online games and the idea of community work which can serve as caring practice.

7.2 Raised Awareness; Questionable Action

Since Ethics is a subject that revolves around matters of life and relations with others, teachers expressed concern about the practical effectiveness of teaching Ethics mostly through class dialogue. They were skeptical as to whether their students would put words (discussed in class) into action when faced with real-life situations. In fact, when asked if caring can be taught, the teachers responded as follows:

Daisy: Yes, I think anything can be taught to other people, to what degree is then dependent on a lot of other things, but, yes, people can be taught to care. People can be taught to have a conscience, that they don't necessarily have automatically, or that they haven't been brought up to have, but I think it's, um, something that absolutely can be instilled.

Here we see that although Daisy is optimistic about teaching care, she also mentions that there are limits to this. In a similar vein, Iris goes into further detail:

Iris: I think that rather than the caring itself, we can teach the recognition of needs. So, recognizing people's vulnerability, yes! Whether to act upon it, no. So, let me give you a silly example. A lady's crossing the street with a lot of shopping. I can teach them to recognize and empathize, okay? But to actually act upon it, *umbad* (then), I think that needs a little bit more than teaching. I think that is a holistic, um, depending on that person's life experiences; if someone's bitter at life, they're not going to want to help someone else. They're going to recognize that the person needs help, *dan bħal meta jkun hemm traffic accident u min jieqaf jgħin, u min jibqa għaddej* (this is like when there is a traffic accident and some people stop to help and others keep on driving by).

Through Iris' account, we see that teachers are only guaranteed their students' word; that they will do the right thing when faced with a dilemma; but can Ethics education be limited to mere words? Another Ethics teacher, Holly who works with younger students said that she often presents them with fictitious stories. However, she asks how they would act when faced with this situation:

Holly: It's quite positive (students' response), I don't know if they do it to please me. They tell me, "I help them, and I do that and I do that." Yes, in the classroom setting, they show positive aspects of it. So, they react positively to such situations, I mean, yes, they say, "I help, I let her sit instead of me..." They react positively to such situations.

Although the teachers sound hopeful about the effectiveness of imaginary situational responses, it is clear that they realize that their ability to teach care is currently limited to the recognition of needs through dialogue. As Iris argues, 'ultimately, it's the persons' life experiences that will lead them to acting well, or not'.

Noddings (1991) acknowledges this by stating that; "*uncaring homes and uncaring schools are likely to produce uncaring students*", however, she also says that this should be a good reason for schools to support students in learning how to play a part in caring relations. It is important to keep in mind that "*caring relations require a contribution from both carer and cared-for and being cared-for may be a necessary prerequisite to learning to care*" (p.165). This does not mean that a child who is not

given the right kind of care at home will be unable to learn to do so themselves, it simply means that schools need to address this problem and make it their priority to provide students with meaningful opportunities to encounter care (Noddings, 1991). The teachers in my study, however, add another dimension to children's opportunities for experiencing care which does not only refer to them being cared for but encountering opportunities for being caring themselves.

According to Heather, the Ethics syllabus does provide opportunities to verbalize care, yet, since it follows Lipman's Philosophy for Children "*letting the argument lead*" (Davey, 2005, p.35) approach (refer to the Literature Review on p.15) it tends to focus mainly on the thought process brought about through discussion, rather than the students' very practice of care beyond the classroom.

Heather: The syllabus, in itself, offers that opportunity per se, and, it goes into different aspects of care, and there, you, um, expand the notions. I feel that, again, I have a language background, so, vocabulary is very important. So, when you teach aspects of care, um, and the different facets and the situations that you present your students, you're also empowering their thought process, to evolve. Because when you're taught a new concept, a new word, you are automatically expanding that area of thought, that area of reason. Reason relies heavily on... we talk, we talk, we use words to speak to ourselves, so it's very important to address situations, and call them by name.

To Heather, language, vocabulary and the thought processes that occur through the discussion of various situations are only a *part* of the rationality of caring. Noddings (1991) refers to it as "*interpersonal reasoning*" – which can only be sustained through "*interpersonal contact*" (p.164). "*It is guided by an attitude that values the relationship of the reasoners over any particular outcome, and it is marked by attachment and connection rather than separation and abstraction*" (Noddings, 1991, p.158). Still, Noddings (1991) makes it clear that although interpersonal reasoning is required for ethical decision making, it is not enough on its own, and it does not guarantee moral behavior. She further states that in order for a person to expand their ability for attentive love, they must engage in caring activities which *include* dialogue and interpersonal reasoning *but are not limited* to this (Noddings, 1991).

Noddings (1991) also emphasizes that this requires practice, "*preferably under the loving supervision of an experienced caregiver*" (p.165). It is no wonder that the teachers expressed concern over their

ability to impart care to their students. How are they supposed to facilitate Ethics (care) and concern for the world by solely using the faculties of the mind? How can students learn how to care for others by simply attempting to put themselves in the shoes of others?

7.3 Active Suggestions

Kohlberg (1981) and Gilligan's (1982) work (refer to the Literature Review on p.5) motivate us to ponder deeply about relatedness and how it can be manifested in different ways by people who are differently positioned through their gender. However, these studies both present shortcomings, since they are both based on hypothetical moral dilemmas where the person is thinking more about what he/she could do if in a similar situation rather than sufficiently understanding the various moral motivations (Noddings, 2016) for the other persons responses and decision. Through social and emotional learning, however, teachers are able to get more noteworthy support in comprehending and encouraging empathy; which is why Noddings (2016) believes that it should form a part of moral education. Expressing that students need more opportunities to listen to their peers and try to understand what *they* are going through (Noddings, 2016).

The teacher participants in this study point to an important missing element in teaching Ethics, yet they showed a pro-active stance and even provided suggestions as to how to start tackling this issue. They contemplate providing students with opportunities that go further than class discussion, debate and role play. My presentation of their recommendations are discussed in an order which I consider to be the most feasible and practical to accomplish in the teaching of Ethics in Malta.

7.3.1 Encountering Caring Others

The first suggestion proposed by Jasmin is the opportunity to encounter professionals who encounter people who have to take moral decisions:

Jasmin: They're very compassionate, the idea of compassion comes out a lot, and they never tend to be extreme in their ideas. So, you'll never have someone just for example, um, say openly, you know that they just disagree or agree only with abortion. They tend to, you know, you get them to balance out their ideas. But again, I also believe that these subjects, unless they're taught, like, from an ethical perspective, ideally, when, even teaching abortion you'll have someone who is in the field teaching it. To come up with these ideas, again, of life before

conception, or after or whatever. So, we try to do our best, but in reality, we really, maybe always get to the bottom of...

Researcher: So, you would say maybe bringing somebody who's been through it or...?

Jasmin: No, ideally you have a person who is a scientist, who can really tell you exactly, all these ideas, and then maybe someone, aha, who has experience to share. Because sometimes I find myself, in such a topic, treating it like it's just a normal scene, you know?

Jasmin's suggestion to invite professionals who meet people taking difficult ethical decisions on a daily basis is intended for students to understand the contexts of certain decisions more closely. This does not mean that people in such professions are invited to pose their moral compass on others, but to enhance students' understanding of the challenges in taking certain decisions. In fact, Jasmin picks up my suggestion in inviting the people who have experienced taking a particular decision *within* the classroom to make students understand the care and support persons need in difficult and uncertain times.

Jasmin seemed to express some discomfort in dealing with controversial issues such as abortion. Through her account it is clear that even she herself feels as though it is difficult to fully connect to the topic, let alone her fifteen-year-old students. Although she states that they show compassion, the teacher feels that it would be even more beneficial for them to encounter a person who works in a specific field or has been through the hardships themselves. Whilst the issue of abortion remains controversial because of its illegality in Malta, we may consider a similar idea for other topics. Where students will be given the opportunity to meet various individuals who can share their own narratives and well as engage in dialogue with the class. Although this also does not allow students to go further than discussion, they will be able to connect to another caring person who can go into more detail about their lives and even answer questions that students may face. David Hume (1711/1751) tells us that "*people are not motivated by reason but by feeling*", *reason is clearly important in moral decision making, but it does not motivate us. This suggests that we should give more attention to affective education*" (as cited in Noddings, 2016, p.212). Hence, through the opportunity to encounter those who can speak from experience, students may be able to grasp more feeling than what they might from a video or presentation given by the Ethics teacher or even the people who have experienced taking a particular decision *within* the classroom.

7.3.2 Simulations of Care

Poppy has had a positive teaching experience in providing closer encounters of care, delving deeper into situational positioning. She found that ethical online games have proved highly beneficial to engage students in situations that they may seem detached from. Research has indeed shown that ethical reflection has been stimulated through educational video games (Murphy & Zagal, 2011).

Poppy: They are games that have to do with what I want to relay to them. With one particular class, I played the game 'Spent', and, those students who are never interested were so interested, and they were so worried when they were going to lose the job.

Researcher: So, what is it about?

Poppy: It is about homelessness. Homelessness, and, I've got one about refugees, they're all ethical games.

Researcher: Oh! Interesting, can you tell me more please?

Poppy: *Jigifieri (So)*, they have to find a home, and, we found a home which is far away, further away. And they told me, "we find one closer because, we're going to spend a lot of travel expenses!" and I told them, "closer apartments are more expensive." So, I was teaching them, what life is all about.

Researcher: Aha...

Poppy: In a way, and how difficult it is when you don't have any education. Because we could only find lifting jobs and then they had problems with their back, and we needed insurance; this is all its about. We were playing this game, and then they had children, and then, they wanted to send them on an outing, and they told me; "No, I won't send them, I don't have any money!" and I said, "You don't send them?! *X'jigifieri* (what do you mean) you don't send your kids? What if your mother doesn't send you, what would you do?"

Poppy, who is a middle-school teacher, recounts her experience of using an online game to try and enable students to understand the difficulties of life and homelessness without introducing students to an actual person who has been through this trauma. 'Spent' (created by McKinney Urban Ministries of Durham) is an online 'simulation' which presents poverty and the difficulties that come with it, in a way that students can start to relate to. Throughout the game, students must collectively make a number of decisions which will impact their (fictitious) income and lead to further consequences. Through this game, students come in contact with moral issues that relate to health,

poor education, and the provision of basic needs for family. 'Spent' is aimed at giving people an idea of the daily challenges that people in poverty and homelessness face. Similar to the lives of those in poverty, there are often no ideal solutions for the player to choose from, leading players to lose their 'income' and the game. Following this defeat, and the raised-awareness it creates, the person/s playing are asked to donate to a non-profit organization which actually helps those in need (McKinney Urban Ministries of Durham, n.d.).

"Incorporating games into the classroom culture can be a powerful learning tool for children as it allows students to be engaged in the learning progress. Games are a collaborative and interactive experience. They will guide learners' social and emotional development." (Reid, 2019, para.12)

Although these games present fictitious situations, according to Poppy, the questions asked throughout are taken seriously by students of this age (11-13); explaining that they get deeply immersed in collaboratively engaging in moral dilemmas using a virtual medium. *"Methods like online games, gathering information about issues, and opening spaces for free discussion can help students learn from each other about important issues* (Peterson, n.d., p.2). Poppy also mentioned a number of similar ethical games (refer to the Games4Sustainability website found in the Recommendations on p. 70) which, from the comfort of the classroom, may act as a stepping stone to providing students the opportunity to act besides think and feel in more empathetic and caring ways; allowing for engaging and living real-world problems through a kind of simulated experience.

Heggert and Flowers (2019) assert that social media can be a good opportunity to supply platforms for students to recognize their place as democratic citizens, understand how society functions, learn from each other and create their own narratives and learning experiences, which will in turn, *"strengthen community, social capital, and participatory democracy"* (p.3). Considering the current Covid-19 situation and the fact that an ever *"increasing part of our lives take place in online spaces, then surely there is a necessity to teach young people to behave as active citizens in those spaces"* (Heggert and Flowers, 2019, p.4). Nonetheless, they clarify that it takes more than guidance on these issues to enable actual citizenship in students, recommending that schools should give students the opportunity *"to embrace activist and experiential notions of learning, with an emphasis placed on community and grassroots action and organizing."* (Heggert and Flowers, 2019, p.4)

7.3.3 Providing Opportunities to Care

Similarly, I argue that although online mediums can facilitate learning, we need to go further and pair these virtual experiences with active roles for our students in the community, where they can truly start to encounter others, and play a part in the society which they form a part of. This is in line with the holistic approach to teaching Ethics which one of the teachers suggested when asked to describe the ideal way to teach and enable care:

Daisy: To show it, to show it. I really wish we had more time dedicated to these things. One of the things I've been telling the head mistress for years is that we need a whole program of community services in school. Proper community services, where each child *has to do*, a set amount of whatever hours, or two days or whatever, where, regardless of syllabus, just two days of... I don't know, I would make it much more than that...

Researcher: What would the ideal be?

Daisy: It would be, that these children are doing community services. That they go and they spend a day at an old people's home, *really helping*, not, being there like; 'let's sing a song'. That they actually put on an apron, they get into the kitchen, and help prepare lunch, you know, help them get ready for bed, help them – nothing that's too invasive, obviously, but, things that show them that the elderly are valid, and important and get them to spend time with them a little bit, by hearing their stories, by seeing them as humans. The same with animals, the same with other children, the same with the disabled, um, the same with the planet, don't just, you know, they should have the sections and the children can get to choose and, honestly, I would be a bit dictator-ish. I would be like; "Here are the five sections, there's the planet, there are animals, there are old people, there are young people, and there are, I don't know, refugees, and I would say, you're going to do these five over the five years. You can tick one for the first year, another for the second, so on", and at the end of school life, they're going to have had a holistic experience of what it's like to not be you. To not have these privileges and these amazing lifestyles which they, 'deserve', fine, but they haven't earned.

Daisy's suggestion is very much in line with Noddings' (1984) third component for enhancing moral education (refer to the Literature Review on p.14). So, besides modeling, dialogue and confirmation of good thinking through the use of reason; practice, as Noddings herself acknowledges, is essential for students to start to learn how to care. Through this, they may gain a "*relational capacity*"

(Noddings, 1984, p.18) which is only made possible when learnt with various people and in different places. She suggests that; *“All students should be involved in caring apprenticeships, and these tasks should have equal status with the other tasks encountered in education”* (Noddings, 1984, p.188). This proposition would take students out of the classroom and into the real-world where they can encounter care and concern first hand. Through these experiences, Noddings (1992) explains that besides acquiring a new skill and encountering others, this will also elicit respect for various human talents and capabilities and expose students to new and challenging situations which may be helpful to their understanding of life.

Holly, on the other hand, points to some challenges in realizing this kind of teaching. Although she thinks it would be highly beneficial, she feels that at the moment it might be problematic to take students out of school for an Ethics outing being that she is the only Ethics teacher present and seeing that it would disrupt the various classes that her students form a part of:

Holly: I think they would relate more (if they were provided the opportunity to encounter others). Being an Ethics teacher, I don't have the opportunity. For example, I can... but it's more difficult to, take them to an elderly home for example, to show them how you care for others, because since I don't teach a whole class... I mean it's difficult to just get four pupils out of their class and take them on an outing all by yourself.

With this being said, although it may entail quite some effort and restructuring, I do not believe that the possibilities to encounter care should be as limited to thinking critically about situations as they currently are. If we want students to gain a true sense of what it means to live in society with others, we must strive for *“enhancement of the ethical ideal, of the sense of relatedness, of renewed commitment to receptivity”* (Noddings, 1984, p.190). However, this will only happen if communities value the importance of genuine caring encounters and integrate this opportunity as part of students' learning experience. Noddings (1984) speaks about this in the following:

“The practical difficulty involved in welcoming so many unpaid learner-workers to the occupational domain can be solved if we are willing to commit ourselves to the education of our children as ones-caring. If we continue to insist that all work – at whatever stage of expertise – is dignified only to the extent that it is paid, then we really are lost as a caring community” (p.188).

Daisy shares similar concern. Expressing that, at the end of the day, Ethics lessons can be more centered around care, and that the school should provide further opportunities to practice this outside of class.

Daisy: Every topic always has that, always ends up in that place; what impact can you make? As an individual, and then it opens up to community, and then open it up to country and then, World. So, they can see that their place is central and integral. So, yes, I think the caring comes into all of this, we kind of try to make things a bit practical, so that they can *really* see. For example, we do shoe boxes at school now, so we get shoe boxes and fill them with toys, and get only fun things, not nappies, literally, toys. Wrap them in really cute wrapping paper and we do a delivery, and take them to orphanages, or to refugee centers and so on. And every year, I insist that we have a bunch of kids that come with me.

In order to help students understand that their contribution to the communities they live in is central and integral, Daisy suggests that *where possible*, what students learn in Ethics classroom should be carried out and practiced with different groups in society. This way, students can live and learn to understand the effect and potential care that they can give. Furthermore, seeing that Ethics is a subject that deals with matters that require care, students will at least be able to have physical and embodied experiences which they can relate to the discourse within the classroom, and then keep in their memories.

7.4 What it's Like to Not Be You

Noddings (2016) states that “*the main aim of education is to produce better people—better in all aspects of a complete life: moral, physical, social, vocational, aesthetic, intellectual, spiritual, and civic*” (p.1). Thus, through the careful choice of opportunities presented to students, they can and will definitely be affected positively by the encounters they have with others in the community and the very opportunities that the teachers create for students in class.

Lastly, Daisy proceeded by narrating a meaningful episode where a Christmas party was organized at a school for children with disabilities, and her students were able to integrate and learn from this encounter with those who had a different reality to theirs.

Daisy: It was *such* an experience, because for the first hour or two, our kids were like statues, they had *no idea* what to do. How to talk to them, how to interact, and then I was getting so frustrated, I said, they're looking... I was embarrassed of my students. Then we went into a courtyard and I told them, "guys, okay think about your senses and think about which one has been eliminated for this person, so if this person can't see or can't hear", because they had quite a few disabilities, I said, "they still have their other senses, so for example their sense of touch is really powerful", I said, "so if you just touch them, they're going to feel something, that, okay, maybe you can't talk to them, or, you know, but you can touch." And they were saying, "maa, what are we going to do?!" I said, "well, I don't know." But if you kind of do this (as she touched my elbow) on an elbow or on a hand, and they can feel your presence, it's comforting and it's nice, and if they can hear, you can explain to them, what's around them or what they're seeing. So, then, I kind of gave them a task, in a way, and then they went back in and then slowly, it took a while, but then they kind of slowly, really, relaxed, and again, afterwards, they all were very, um, touched by the experience, you know?

This experience was meant to teach students that difference is not something to fear, yet, unless they had been given this opportunity, they might have never been able to understand this. Hoffman (2000) tells us that, "*It is through our feeling what others feel in times of pain and joy that we are able to gain perspective about others' lives, and thus respond to their needs in a caring and loving manner*" (as cited in Swick & Freeman, 2004, p.3). Daisy and the rest of the teachers made a great emphasis on the importance of caring practice and encounter, and I believe that this is something that should definitely be taken on as a part of the teaching of care in Ethics classes.

Chapter 8 Conclusion

8.1 A Deeper Understanding of Care

The Ethics syllabus provides ample opportunities for students to think and argue about topics and issues related to care and dependency. Although these are important starting points for dialogues about care, this dissertation highlights the importance of formally recognizing the very pedagogies of care that ground the whole teaching of Ethics in schools.

The six Ethics teacher participants believe that an ethics of care should serve as a basis for all teaching, yet, teachers of Ethics have an enhanced responsibility to teach care. For this study, I listened to the teachers' narratives and pedagogies of care and intertwined them with literature in ethics and education in order to present further understanding of concepts and practices of care that are deeply aligned with their teaching experience. The sharing of experiences and ideas in their narratives highlighted the caring responsibilities and challenges that teachers of Ethics face. However, our conversations emphasized their hope and the willingness to provide students with the positive guidance they require to flourish in an everchanging world. This was expressed beautifully by Heather.

Heather: This is how I see it; caring is the sense of wanting to give your students great guidelines to become functioning individuals. With a mind, with skills, but with a heart as well, you cannot neglect that. Otherwise, we will only be producing robots. And dangerous ones, as well, because unless you put care or whatever you want to call it; love, care, the notion of, um, compassion, it's a form of care. Some form of love, under whichever capacity. That's an integral part of the development of a human being, especially when they're students, when they're children, when they're growing up; it's very important. Otherwise, we will end up with intelligent robots. Unless you put the care in whatever you do, you will be able to harm people. You have to care, in order not to harm, and the idea of not harming has to be instilled in everything we do. The idea of making good, of doing good, the idea of positive outcome, from whatever we're doing, has to be instilled in the notion of care, in the notion of our teaching, and whatever we teach. Also, we are beyond whatever we teach, and the Ethics syllabus, to me, is an integral part of the make-up of every... *Should be*, an integral part of the make-up of each and every student. Not just those students who choose Ethics. So, in which

ever capacity, any teacher should incorporate any aspect of this syllabus, within her curriculum, or in whatever she teaches. So, there should be ample space for every teacher to teach care above all else, in order to help students become better human beings.

While Heather and the other teachers who took part in this study commend the teaching of Ethics and its ability to expand student's minds through discussion, they also repeatedly emphasized the significance of interdependent relationships which exist in and outside of school. The teachers' responses indicate that concentrating solely on moral reasoning is not enough. They suggest that reflecting about moral issues through critical thinking does not adequately address the relational aspects that are present in the Ethics syllabus. Asserting that students should have opportunities to concretely practice and enhance their, rational and emotional potential to care through encounters with others.

In addition, the teachers suggested that theoretical ideas about morality should go beyond Lipman's (2011) methods. These suggestions provide positive insights which may prove beneficial to the development of the teaching of Ethics.

8.2 Recommendations

My first point is that a reverse study of student's perceptions of care in the Ethics classroom is important in order to grasp the variety of perspectives of care and how it may be manifested. At the same time, I would also like to list a number of suggestions related to the teaching of Ethics in Maltese schools with the hope of increasing students' potential to care which will, in turn, expand their moral growth.

To provide consistency throughout this study, the recommendations which I will be suggesting have come to light through a combination of theoretical research, the teacher's narratives as well as my own thoughts grounded in this relational ethic. Feminist ethicists of care draw attention to the importance of context in ethical decision making and the problem of the lack of care for people involved in dilemmas, especially if these are concerned with the care of others. A scholar who concurs with this idea and has helped broaden my own understanding of care and added a new dimension to this study is Maurice Hamington. Hamington (2010) calls for an action-based ethic which is more "embodied", explaining that;

“A performative theory of care implies that ethics cannot remain a cognitive acceptance and application of abstract moral frameworks but requires attending to the creation and recreation of self and other in the ongoing iterations of caring actions.” (Hamington, 2012, p.43)

As much as theorists helped me widen and deepen my thoughts about the teachers’ ideas of care, it is the narratives and conceptual meanings which emerged from conversations with the six teacher participants that have given me greater understanding of the importance of an ethics of care in the teaching of Ethics in schools.

8.2.1 Moving Beyond Moral Reasoning

Philosophical and theoretical aspects were, and still are a very important part of the make-up of being an Ethics teacher. However, one of the most evident and relevant characteristics which transpired from the teachers are their particular understandings and ideas about the caring relations which are necessary to their teaching. These beliefs, which coincide with the ethics of care, did not only come from content which they have learnt, but from the relational aspect of teaching which is enhanced through discussion about topics that revolve around the human ethical experiences.

To understand the implications of an ethics of care in practice, I intertwine theories of care in parallel with the teacher’s own voices and pedagogies in the following list of recommendations which may be implemented in and outside of school:

1. Providing encounters of personal and relatable inquiry

Jasmine suggested that students should be able to encounter people who are ethically inclined. This is similar to Hamington’s (2010) “*engaged inquiry*” (p.690), however, instead of actually meeting activists who work to improve society, he proposes the study of relatable lives of people who have stepped forth and demonstrated caring actions or who have been cared for in a way that made a difference in their lives.

2. Providing simulations of empathic experiences that address issues of inequality, injustice sustainable living and solidarity.

Although Poppy spoke of her positive experience with ethical online games, she also stated that not all online games are accessible to schools. There are an abundance of these games

available on <https://games4sustainability.org/gamepedia/> and I hope they will be made accessible to all Ethics teachers and their students.

3. Providing encounters with difference

In one of Daisy's accounts, she mentioned the effect of a certain Christmas party which she attended with her students, explaining how meaningful their encounter with difference was. This coincides with Hamington's (2010) suggestion for "*rich encounters with diverse others*", where students will be able to engage with difference and learn from the unfamiliar. For this, I think it would be beneficial if students were given opportunities to meet with people (both within and outside the school premises) who come from various countries, cultures and realities that are different to them.

4. Providing internships with caring professionals

Noddings' (1984) suggests that in order for students to learn how to care they must engage in internships with caring professionals. This will give students the opportunity to understand the intricacies of caring occupations which may also inspire them to take on this role as caring adults.

5. Providing practical opportunities within the community

Daisy, Holly and Iris all spoke of the importance of opportunities to enact care in the community. This is in agreement with Noddings (1984) who asserts that children should be presented different enriching experiences of care. These are a few of my own suggestions: beach clean-ups, volunteering in animal shelters, volunteering on farms with the hope that students will learn how to grow their own crops and the encouragement of fund-raising initiatives such as clothes-swaps and cake sales which will give students a sense of responsibility in working towards causes which they care about.

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Further Reading

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12th July 2019

RE: Application for Research Ethics Clearance 2013_04062019_Emma Maria Hickey

Dear Ms Hickey,

With reference to your application 2013_04062019_Emma Maria Hickey for Research Ethics clearance, I am pleased to inform you that **FREC finds no ethical or data protection issues in terms of content and procedure.**

You may therefore proceed to approach potential informants to collect data using the tools/documents outlined in this application.

You are reminded that it is your responsibility - under the guidance of your supervisor - to distribute Information Letters and Consent/Assent Forms that are written in appropriate and correct English and Maltese.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "MT Farrugia".

Dr Marie Therese Farrugia
Chairperson Faculty Research Ethics Committee
Faculty of Education



MTL

Date	08.04.2020
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**Request to Restructure the
MTL Dissertation due to
Covid-19 Form**

Proposal Identifier	Emma Maria Hickey
Course Years	

1. Name of Applicant:	Emma Maria Hickey
1.1 I.D. [REDACTED]	1.2 Teaching Area Ethics
1.3 Mobile +35699 [REDACTED]	1.4 Tel. +35621 [REDACTED]
1.5 Email emma [REDACTED]@um.edu.mt	

2. Name of Principal Supervisor	Prof. Simone Galea		
2.1 Faculty / Department / Institute	Education		
2.2 Telephone (office/mobile)	+356 [REDACTED]		
2.3 Email simone [REDACTED]@um.edu.mt			
2.4 Post	Full Time <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Part Time <input type="checkbox"/>	TR status
2.5 I confirm that I have discussed the proposed restructuring of my dissertation with my Principal Supervisor (and Advisor if applicable). <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			

NOTE TO STUDENT

The Supervisor must be kept in copy when submitting this application to Ms Stefania Micallef, stefania.micallef@um.edu.mt.

The entries must be typed NOT handwritten.

The deadline for submitting the application is 14th April, noon.

PLEASE SEND THIS APPLICATION USING YOUR UNIVERSITY OF MALTA EMAIL ACCOUNT

<p>4. Original Title of Research Study/Project (as approved by the MTL Dissertations Committee). The title must be TYPED.</p>
<p>The Ethics of Care. A Narrative Inquiry with Teachers of Ethics.</p>
<p>5. I would like to restructure my dissertation by choosing the following option: (tick as appropriate)</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Option A: The student will keep to the study designed, including its Literature Review and Methodology Chapter and any data already collected.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Option B: The student will change the design of the dissertation substantially.</p>
<p>6. In approx. 300 words, please suggest a new title (if applicable) and explain how you plan to restructure your dissertation. This entry must be TYPED.</p>
<p>The title and aims of my research study will remain the same, although there are some minor changes that will have to occur due to the current situation.</p> <p>Originally, I planned to conduct both interviews and a focus group with six teachers of Ethics where I would inquire into 1) teachers own concepts and practice of caring and 2) the pedagogies by which they seek to teach caring to students in Ethics classes.</p> <p>To date, I have been able to collect a substantial amount of data through the six individual interviews, however, because of the current restrictions, I will not be able to conduct the focus group where all the teachers would have met and discussed personal accounts of caring together.</p> <p>The aim of this focus group was to create a space where teachers could engage in dialogue about their experiences of care in the Ethics classroom. This was intended for teachers to enlarge their thoughts about other teachers' practices of care.</p> <p>The aim of the focus group can still be reached by sending a copy of the dissertation to each teacher participant in my study.</p> <p>This means that since the main research questions mentioned in 1) and 2) above can still be addressed through the ample data gathered from the individual interviews, the title of the study will remain the same.</p>

For Office Use:

Dissertation Proposal # **Emma Maria Hi** has been:

Accepted

Accepted subject to minor amendments

Rejected

Official feedback for student (if applicable):

Request to restructure has been accepted by the MTL Dissertation Committee



Chairperson (MTL Dissertation Board)

Date 4/21/20

RECRUITMENT LETTER

“The Ethics of Care. A Narrative Inquiry with Teachers of Ethics.”

Date:

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Emma Hickey and I am currently reading for a Masters in Teaching and Learning at the University of Malta under the supervision of Professor Simone Galea (simoneXXXXXX@um.edu.mt). I am in the process of writing my dissertation which is entitled “The Ethics of Care. A narrative inquiry with teachers of Ethics”. As the title of my dissertation suggests, the aim of my research is to explore concepts and practices of caring by teachers and how they themselves address and engage in an ethic of care with the class.

I am currently looking for participants to take part in my research study. Should you be keen to participate and are willing to be interviewed, and contribute in a discussion with other teachers, please contact me on emmaXXXXXX@um.edu.mt and +35699XXXXXX.

The focus of the interview which will be audio-recorded, will center on your own understanding of the term ‘care’ and experiences of care in your role as a teacher; this is likely to take up an hour of your time and may be held in a place which is convenient to you. You will also be asked about your understanding and practice of care in the teaching of Ethics and the teaching of care in the ethics class.

After the interview stage, you will be asked to participate in a focus group together with other teachers, to discuss relevant themes further, this will also be audio-recorded. It is important to note that while what you state will remain anonymous within my study, I will also ask you to kindly sign a non-disclosure agreement in which you state that you will not divulge information which will be discussed in the focus group.

Should you require any further information or clarifications, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind Regards,
Emma Hickey

CONSENT FORM

“The Ethics of Care. A Narrative Inquiry with Teachers of Ethics.”

I agree to take part in the project named above after having read and understood the information letter related to the study.

I understand that the data will be collected through a one hour long semi-structured interview, followed by a focus group.

I agree that interviews and focus group discussions will be recorded through the use of a data recorder in order to be transcribed soon after.

I understand that once the research is finalised, the recordings will be destroyed.

The transcripts of the interview and focus group will be stored anonymously.

I understand that the information will be transcribed, analysed and quoted throughout the thesis.

I understand that my name will not be mentioned or quoted in any stage and that total anonymity is guaranteed.

I understand that during the focus group, any information I give may be divulged due to the fact that other participants will be present.

I agree that during the focus group I will not mention specific episodes that may identify colleagues, students or teachers neither will I refer to other people by their name.

I understand that only the supervisor and examiners might request access to the transcribed data divulged during the interviews. However, this data will be made anonymous.

I understand that I will remain free to quit the study at any point and for whatever reason, and that in the case that I withdraw there will be no negative consequences.

I understand that contribution to the focus group forms part of a conversation with other participants and can therefore only be withdrawn up to the point that it can be rendered anonymous.

I understand that there will be no deception in the data collection process.

I understand that conclusions from the research will be communicated to me through a brief report, but I may contact the researcher at any point if need be.

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

Name of Researcher

Date

Signature

Email: emmaXXXXX@um.edu.mt

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

“The Ethics of Care. A Narrative Inquiry with Teachers of Ethics.”

The following are questions which will guide my narrative inquiry during interviews with the teachers:

1. What does care mean to you? What importance, if any, does it have in your life?
2. Can you narrate episodes and/or situations that were particularly meaningful to you?
3. Why did you become a teacher, and a teacher of Ethics in particular?
4. Do you see teaching as a caring practice? In what way? Can you give examples?
5. Do you think that caring can be taught? Why? Can you give example/s how?
6. Can you tell me of the opportunities you have as a teacher of ethics to “teach” care?
7. Would you kindly narrate some examples?
8. What is your ideal of a caring teacher in class? Does the Ethics class offer different opportunities for caring relations? How?
9. Give examples of how you seek to care for students in your Ethics classes?